MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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#400—THE SHITWORKER ISSUE

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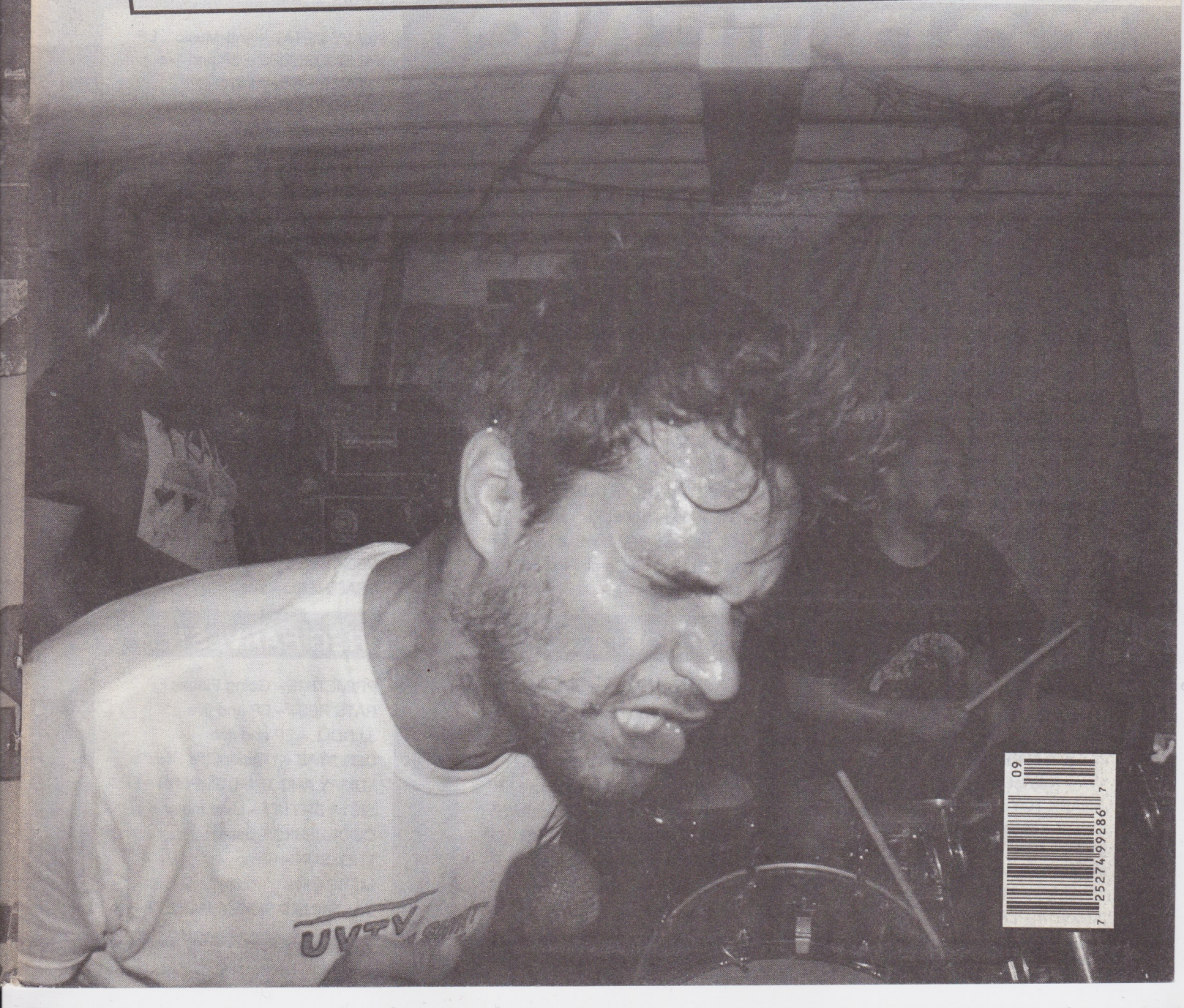

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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
KALEIDOSCOPE – EP and live
JJ DOLL – EP and live
ANXIETY – LP
V/A – Neu Ist Zeit LP
EFIALTIS – both EPs
G.I. & THE IDIOTS – LP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
ALIENATION – 2016 EP
SP CAOS – Demo 1984 EP
FREEK 99 – live

MATT BADENHOP

BLAZING EYE – "Brain/Lonely Corpse"
DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"
HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
SIEVEHEAD – Buried Beneath EP
XM2 – demo
BOMBARDEMENT – demo
KALEIDOSCOPE – Vol. 2 No. 1 EP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
EFIALTIS – Efialtis EP
MABS – live
OLD CITY / FOLLETO – live

MITCH CARDWELL

IN THE RED 25TH ANNIVERSARY – live
DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
THE MAD – Mask 12" picture disc
CAUCASOID – Isn't She Cute? EP
LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – LP
THE FALL – both LPs
KALEIDOSCOPE – Vol. 2 No. 1 EP
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
SHARK TOYS – LP

ROBERT COLLINS

PRESSING ON – live
EFIALTIS – both EPS
FINAL – live
HERO DISHONEST – LP
PRIVATE ROOM – live
KALEIDOSCOPE – Vol. 2 No. 1 EP
BLACK PILLS – live
MACHO BOYS – live
NEGATIVE STANDARDS – LP
DEAD HERO – live

LAYLA GIBBON

HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
SP CAOS – Demo 1984 EP
G.I. & THE IDIOTS – LP
V/A – Neu Ist Zeit LP
SHARK TOYS – Outsider Sect LP
UNITS – High Pressure Days EP
BLACK PANTIES – Dead & Gone LP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
EFIALTIS – Efialtis EP
ANXIETY – LP

DAN GOETZ

DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
NURSE – The Anchor EP
SILENT ERA – Mini Bosses EP
BIG MESS – You Know I Care LP
SIEVEHEAD – Buried Beneath EP
LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – LP
HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
NANDAS – Exo EP
ROUGH KIDS – LP

GREG HARVESTER

PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
RATS REST – EP and live
JJ DOLL – EP and live
DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"
LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – LP
SISTA BRYTET – Livet Inglasat LP
COOL JERKS – demo
FULL SUN – demo
MABS – live
WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? – live

KENNY KAOS

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS – 45
CANDY AND THE STRIPES – LP
CHEATER SLICKS – LP
OS COURETTES – 45
GAGGERS – "Don't Follow Me" 45
CHROME REVERSE – EP
UNITS – High Pressure Days EP
MARTHA – Blisters In The Pit... LP
THE FALL – Dragnet LP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP

MARISSA MAGIC

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – LP
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
V/A – Neu Ist Zeit LP
FREEK 99 – live
HGS / EARTHBOUND – live
KALEIDOSCOPE – Vol. 2 No. 1 EP
SLICING GRANDPA – EP
ANXIETY – LP
EFIALTIS – Efialtis EP
BIG JOANIE – Crooked Room EP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

Conducting recreational research...

CAROLYN KEDDY

CHROME REVERSE – EP
OS COURETTES – 45
MY NAME IS JOE – LP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
LOVESORES – Rock & Roll Animal 10"
MOSQUITO EGO – Glomb LP
HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
GØGGS – LP
UNITS – High Pressure Days EP
CHEATER SLICKS – LP

ROTTEN RON READY

Learn to hate in the '80s...

ELI WALD

ANXIETY – LP
JJ DOLL – EP and live
KALEIDOSCOPE – EP and live
HEAVY METAL – Anti-Music... LP
ALIENATION – 2016 EP
PRIMETIME – Going Places EP
NURSE – The Anchor EP
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RAY LUJAN

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JFA – live / BOSS HOG – live

FRED SCHRUNK

SILENT ERA – Mini Bosses EP
JJ DOLL – You Come First EP
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EFIALTIS – both EPs
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ISSUE 400

Crowd shot from K-Town 2016, by Christina Carlsen / Inferno Photography

COVER: The Bug at the Dingbat Dungeon in Urbana, IL. Photo by Maddie Rehayem. Design by Grace Ambrose.

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For our monumental 400th issue we decided to highlight the people who make this magazine happen: our shitworkers. Every interview in these pages features at least one person who works on *MRR* as part of our all-volunteer staff. Want to become a shitworker yourself? Write to us at mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. You can help from anywhere in the world.

We also redesigned the magazine, for the first time in nearly ten years. It's a work in progress, so if you have suggestions about what we can do better (or want to let us know what we're doing right!) drop us a line.

In the middle of the mag, you'll find a pull-out poster that addresses the rampant and systemic anti-black racism that is currently present in the United States and the rest of the world. (Thanks to our friends at Temporary Services for some inspiration) Hang it up on your wall, in your window, at the record store. Carry it at the next demonstration. Remember: Silence = Death.

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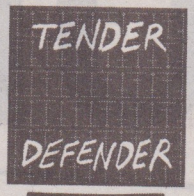

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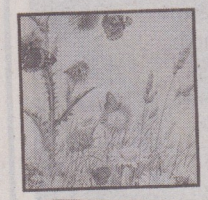
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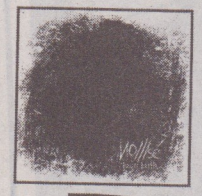
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COLUMNS

It's been a really rough couple of weeks for legit DIY culture here in Portland, and it feels kind of strange to be writing about newly reissued post-punk albums that were originally created over 30 years ago in places thousands of miles away, while right now, this city is in the midst of losing some of its most visible and long-standing remnants of resistance against the bland, upwardly-mobile "development" that is spreading like the plague in all sorts of urban metropoli. But that's what I'm here to do, just a few days after hearing that local punk venue the Know is going to be shuttered come fall because their rent has been raised by 150%, and that the Independent Publishing Resource Center is being forced to relocate to places unknown because *their* rent just got raised by 300%, and the list goes on. I just hope that this homogenization of too many US cities that seems to be endemic at the moment at least yields something along the lines of the creative outpouring that eight years of Reagan instigated in the American punk underground in the '80s.

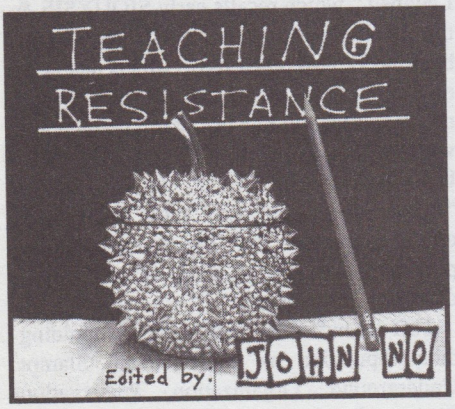
Like many of their UK post-punk peers (GANG OF FOUR, the POP GROUP, A CERTAIN RATIO, et al), Edinburgh, Scotland's BOOTS FOR DANCING situated themselves at the intersection of sharp-edged angularity and taut, dancefloor-ready funk over the course of two singles and a 12" EP in the early 1980s. A full-length LP called *The Undisco Kidds* was recorded in 1982, but the band split up shortly thereafter and the album wound up collecting dust in the metaphorical vaults until last year, when it was finally released thanks to Athens of the North, a Scottish reissue label generally more focused on the vintage funk/disco end of the musical spectrum. The surface unconventionality of that band/label pairing might explain why this one had completely slipped past me until just recently—I imagine that something like a Superior Viaduct treatment might have gotten more traction in the weirdo punk/post-punk circles where my head is usually stuck. To be honest, I hadn't even really been aware of BOOTS FOR DANCING's original, John Peel-endorsed recorded output, despite the fact that the band had a substantial personnel overlap with some of my favorite projects from the Scottish underground, with members of JOSEF K, FLOWERS, the REZILLOS and (non-Scottish) DELTA 5 passing through the group at various points in its relatively brief three year existence. Better late than never, yeah? Songs like "Salt in the Ocean" and "(Let's All) Hesitate" feature the same nervously hiccuped vocals and jittery, tightly-wound rhythms that fellow Scots FRANZ FERDINAND would later water down and make a mint on during the early '00s post-punk revival, but if you want to look at it more optimistically, you could just think of BOOTS FOR DANCING as mirroring the herky-jerky sounds of late '70s obscuro art-punks like New York's COME ON over on opposite side of the Atlantic. Maybe I need to start paying more attention to disco reissue labels in the future? (Athens of the North, aotn.co)

On the subject of recently-rescued early '80s UK post-punk obscurities, Dark Entries just reissued the *Household Shocks* compilation LP from 1980, which is one of those collections focused on a niche microscene (in this case, the post-punk network in the northern English town of Scunthorpe) that was so common in that particular era, and often serves as the only recorded documentation of hundreds of short-lived and/or geographically isolated bands who barely register as a blip on the larger DIY radar. For me, the best part of these records is finding those all-but-forgotten one-off bands who only managed to hold it together for a genius song or two slotted fairly anonymously on a comp before ceasing to exist entirely, and on *Household Shocks*, that honor goes to squarely to teenage punks FAULT 151 (whose singer Mandy was fourteen years old when she joined!). Their nuclear war-anticipating "Radiation Man" could be the chronological bridge of sorts between the spiky, minimalist tension that defined late '70s/early '80s femme-punks in the ANIMALS & MEN vein, and the playful anarcho-punk sound of bands like HAGAR THE WOMB that had found its footing by the mid-'80s. It's really unfortunate that it's the only song they ever recorded, but at least it means that FAULT 151 don't have to live down the later ill-conceived decisions of some of their contemporaries, like developing into a New Romantic band or something. There's plenty of other gems on the comp, though—the appropriately-named Stark Products label that was responsible for the original run of *Household Shocks* was run by the gloomy coldwave duo ONE GANG LOGIC, who contributed two songs of their own to the LP, including the droning, Ian Curtis-dedicated synth-goth epic "The Stand," which has the 4AD post-punk vibe of an even more emotionally-detached BAUHAUS. Also worth a quick mention: the DEFECTORS' moody, dramatic "You Only Laughed," which recalls early SIOUXSIE & the BANSHEES, SINKING SHIPS' jagged, bass-heavy "Weight Loss," which has been referred to as the best GANG OF FOUR song not by GANG OF FOUR (I can't really argue with that), and the wobbly synth-accented UK DIY of PRODUCT OF REASON's "Active Repetition" and "Your Song." An essential reissue for the budget-minded post-punk scholars out there! (Dark Entries, darkentriesrecords.com)

Tuff Enuff Records are upholding their reputation as the de facto Slampt Underground Organization Preservation Society of our modern times with their latest cassette release, the five-song demo from Leeds' CRUMBS. "Tiptoes" is a bit of an outlier, with a skeletal, rhythmic pulse (is that a cowbell clanging away there?) that overlays the danceability of the NYC No Wave-era army of lady post-punks (think a less technically-precise BUSH TETRAS or ESG) with the raw, ramshackle energy of BRATMOBILE and friends in early '90s Olympia, while the other four songs stick closer to that Slampt-patented formula of needling, off-kilter riffs, shouty and deadpan

vocals, and a lo-fi econo-punk stomp that emphasizes the message over the medium. "Stockport Syndrome" might be my favorite, recalling the gloriously messy female-fronted garage-y punk (don't call it garage-punk) sounds of the mid-to-late '90s Slampt brigade that included bands like SALLY SKULL and INTERNATIONAL STRIKE FORCE. There was a traveling exhibition called *Alien She* that passed through my workplace last year, ostensibly chronicling the visual culture of riot grrrl's heyday and its lasting impact on disparate DIY communities in the two decades since, and it included, among other things, various 7" singles, hand-dubbed demo tapes and scrawled handbills for gigs culled from a handful of riot grrrl epicenters, presented inside of scene-specific plexiglass boxes. CRUMBS would seem to be the perfect example of how those GOLDEN STARLET and PUSSYCAT TRASH records from 1994 that were selected to be preserved as artifacts in the exhibition's "England" section continue to reverberate in what the contemporary UK underground of boy / girl revolutionaries are putting to tape in 2016, outside of the gallery and its carefully arranged display cases. (Tuff Enuff, crumbscrumbs.bandcamp.com)

Say hey! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA, digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org



This month's Teaching Resistance is from punk lifer (and oft-contributor/shitworker at MRR*) Mimi Thi Nguyen. Nguyen is an author, public speaker, and professor of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois. Her column focuses on questions of what justice, intersectionality and radicalism actually mean at college campuses today, and she addresses the challenges of being a radical educator who actually gives a fuck about students in an often-reactionary, cynical and neoliberal modern higher education environment. Mimi can be emailed directly at mimi@mimithinguyen.com.*

In a faculty meeting to interview a prospective candidate (one I opposed, and my reasons will be clear in a moment), one of my colleagues said, "The students we get in Gender and Women's Studies are so radical, so activist, but they don't understand the real world. How do you think your scholarship could teach them about the real world?" The candidate happily agreed that radical students are impractical heads-in-clouds dreamers, and bubbled on about statistics and samples as useful instruments for familiarizing students with the truths of the so-called real world. (This, despite the fact that she admitted that her own samples in her studies of gendered expectations in the workplace did not disaggregate according to race, occupation, or economic status, while referring to Black women—and I suppose the rest of us—as "sub-groups" and trans persons as "statistically non-impactful.")

I was absolutely furious at both these smiling, "nice" feminist scholars nodding in agreement, *Oh, silly students!* Because a candidate interview is not the time or place, I said nothing even as I sat stiffly, staring down at my notes (which the offending colleague kept trying to read over my shoulder) or Vaguebooking my outrage (my only outlet during the meeting). It is true that our students, our students in Gender and Women's Studies, are among the more vocal campus activists. In past few years, our students successfully fought for trans-inclusive healthcare in the student insurance plan—a perhaps "statistically non-impactful," but tremendously significant, concession to the necessity of more expansive practices of health and caregiving. They walk the picket line with our graduate student instructors and other non-tenure track faculty whose contracts (teaching each course for a few thousand dollars, far below minimum wage for all their hours) are held in suspension by the administration, year after year. Furthermore, our students often work multiple jobs on top of their course loads, which tend to be heavy because most of them come to Gender and Women's Studies after they've declared other, more traditional majors—and complete our requirements too for love and rage. Many of them are women of color, or queer or gender non-conforming youth, who've either witnessed their friends and peers being policed by adults—administrators, cops, teachers, and other authority figures—or experienced these encounters themselves, for years. Because a substantial number of our students hail from Chicago, where the Chicago Police Department has committed racial terror for decades, I have met more than a handful whose friends or neighbors have been beaten, or shot in so-called "police-involved shootings." For all these reasons I wrote on Facebook, in the heat of the meeting, "Our students are radical *because* they live in the real world."

This is a bit of a side step, of course; so many people (young and old, students and professors) live in the so-called real world, and are not radical, as evidenced in this meeting. But it was important to me to refuse the condescension implicit in that declaration—*our radical students don't live in the real world*—aimed at both our students and those of us who hope to encourage our students to *fuck this shit*.

I went to graduate school on a whim (back when it was more economically viable to be do so "on a whim"), to have an opportunity to think through my concerns about politics and activism, with no particular desire to become a professor—that decision came later, and when it did, I imagined (naively, admittedly) that "being a professor" (what I thought that meant) would allow me some autonomy, flexibility, and creativity, and I strongly identified with an idyllic view of the work—writing, teaching—and its non-material rewards. (We know now that these same qualities are pitched to us as pluses to ameliorate the troubles with uncompensated or undercompensated labor, as attributes of an ideally flexible worker of the neoliberal economy—increasingly subject to insecure employment, semi-secured in temporary networks.) I remember saying, as a young punk, that it was not my "job" to educate others, whether about race or gender or empire. *I'm not getting paid to teach you!* was and is a familiar refrain about such uncompensated labor, one we all learned from Audre Lorde.* And yet teaching others about race or gender or empire is totally (part of) my job now. It is how I access an income, healthcare, retirement, and, because I am in that increasingly minority of tenured faculty, status (however limited), and I hope to do so thoughtfully, and with intention.

That the neoliberal academy treats students as consumers is a frequent target of criticism, especially from professors who chafe at being confronted with students who complain that they did not pay tuition for a B+, or who treat evaluations like Yelp! reviews, complete with microaggressions about our accents, clothes, and characters. I agree absolutely that we should not treat our students as consumers; it's a shitty way to teach and also to learn. But neither do I believe that we need to return to

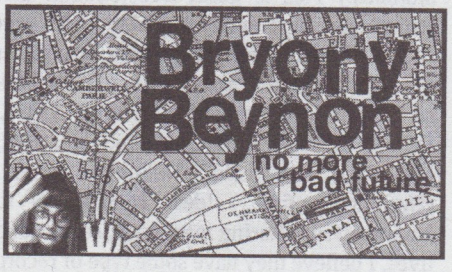
an older model of apprentice-master, and that is what galled me about the encounter with which I began: the condescension implicit in imagining that young persons are the ones caught in an impassable tower, and that we professors are conduits to the "real world." (The reverse is also not true –I come from the real world too, not a tower.)

With that in mind, I try to bring a DIY politics to my classroom, as a refusal of the alienation and divisions of activities or skills (through formal conferrals of expertise, for instance), and as well a *sliding under* institutional or state overpresence. (No state, as the anarchists say, can give you freedom. Or as Foucault wrote, freedom is nothing more than the relation between the governors and the governed.) And because I know now how much I did not know as a nineteen year-old (without presuming that these nineteen year-olds in front of me also don't know what I didn't know), I hope to approach the labor of teaching with generosity and compassion, with regard to students' critical capacities and foundational knowledges. (That said, I undermine the my own authority all the time—not as an anti-intellectual exercise of *fuck knowing stuff*, but as epistemological critique, or questioning how we know what it is we think we know, and that does include criticizing the premise that "experience" is somehow more real, less abstract, than "theory.") I also do my best to recognize the histories that have put them there in those seats, saying those things because it has never occurred to them that other possibilities are sayable, let alone thinkable. I teach with this insight from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in mind, *Why not develop a certain degree of rage against the history that has written such an abject script for you?*

Toward that end, I also disagree with my colleagues that to engage in (seemingly) impossible dreaming is somehow childish, foolish, or shortsighted; and that the path to "useful" knowledge must take the familiar forms of institutional or state appeals—such as policy or law, none which have not protected us yet from the violence of their evaluation and implementation. As someone who has a critique of reform-minded, ameliorative campaigns and yet also recognizes that what I do in the classroom might be understood as such, and as someone who has been inspired by revolutionary movements and yet also knows that these can foster authoritarianism and political arrogance, I hate prescriptions and imperatives. *This is the right way! We have to do that!* We hear all the time that our moment of ongoing crisis requires practical action, straightforward prose, clear reasoning, hard facts, common sense, and so forth, and we hear this from both reformist and revolutionary comers. I am not against these things, but I am against arguments that these things are the only forms through which we define "activism" or politics now. Our imaginative leaps and wild theorizing are what make it possible for us not to succumb to the already-known directives and demands—*be practical, be straightforward*—that haven't yet gotten us out of this mess.

* It is a refusal to spend time and energies to augment others' lack (or perceived lack) of critical knowledge about power or violence, oftentimes knowing that to name an act of power or violence is sometimes to be perceived as an agent of power or violence itself. This is what zinester Bianca Ortiz long ago called the trap of being either educator or enemy, and independent scholar Sara Ahmed calls the feminist killjoy.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, punk-affiliated, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.



FINAL WAR

It was mid June, a week or so before a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union. Suddenly everyone was an economic analyst, a border guard, a factional spokesperson. The media circus, narrated so gleefully, as though the country were in the throes of a friendly football team, complete with hashtags, colors and personalities on buses with fake "facts" about marauding migrants and unelected bureaucrats emblazoned on their sides. I was sat at a desk scrolling through opinions. Word started to come through that a politician had been shot at in the street. Jo Cox MP was campaigning for Britain to remain part of the EU. Guns are a dark abstraction for most in the UK. I felt what must be the regular pang of white hot fear for many in America as I read how Jo had been accosted in a normal street in broad daylight, left bleeding between two cars, shot and stabbed at by a man who spat the words "Britain First" into the still air before he attacked her. Here was this rare thing, a campaigning politician, and she had been murdered by a man who would later, when asked for his name in court, respond with the words "Death to Traitors Freedom for Britain." The media adopted a crazy white man narrative and ignored the truth of his motives: the fascist hate they had so readily enabled. I staggered down the steps to buy a drink and looked into people's faces on the street. Did they know yet? This is the end of it all, I thought. They will not, they cannot proceed with this ridiculous referendum now that its rhetoric had killed someone. The hushed tones of respect followed, of course, there was talk of "sitting back" to "consider" the "tone" of the campaigns in the wake of tragedy and how they "might" have "contributed" to this "atmosphere." A contrite media? A political class capable of quiet reflection? It lasted all of three days. Then came polling day.

In the mania of the post-result reality, the curtain was suddenly pulled back. Reports focused not on the craven campaign lies that Europe was controlling the UK's spending on hospitals and school, forcing its borders open and filling it with parasites, but the cold, clear reality of what had just been voted away. Scientists explained that all their cancer research had been funded by European money. Northern Irish people, roundly ignored in the weeks preceding the vote, were suddenly given airtime to explain that the "Leave" vote, which they had, along with only London and Scotland, roundly rejected, could, with its de-facto requirement for a militarized land border with Ireland, undo the entire peace process. Fear, terror, and suspicion had won over subsidy, support, cooperation. Vox-pop interviews with the people of post-industrial towns scarred by poverty for decades proclaimed with glee how they had "got their country back," then slowly the same voices said with fear and confusion they didn't know what they had voted for. The media had deliberately stirred up a toxic cesspit jingoism that had begun to give off fumes, a slow asphyxiation as reality dawned. Then, as headlines hit that our prime minister had resigned, the circus returned

COLUMNS

COLUMNS

again as a small army of lizard cunts jostled to replace him, the same outlets published cartoons and lead with headlines about "assassination" and "backstabbers," the dust from Jo Cox's brutalized body still hanging in the air. The long line of aristocratic replicants snaking their way through public office will always have the last laugh, of course, and so the soap opera resumes. The masks slip easily around their faces, greased and laughing, Shakespearean metaphors of the chattering classes. An unseen hand guides this sham-democratic process, peddling lies upon lies. A country laid out to dry. The people, it is said, have "spoken," made to garble an un-language of gagged fear, pushed into a spotlight to stumble through the redacted script to a fake play. You painted a target on the broken back of a drowned refugee and called them the EU.

NO ONE RULES

This will be the last column I write from London for a couple years. I am all too sure that the drawbridge will pull up behind me, so for the purposes of keeping you in the loop on the persistently on-fire London punk output for a bit, I wanted to talk about some sounds that have kept me buoyed in the last few months.

SARCASM is arch and high-functioning, referential without ever being reverential. Marcus, on guitar, started from the point of trying to make a punk band with as little distortion of possible after surfing the high seas of noize in SEMI. He's succeeded with warbling solos that never feel wanky. Alex from EFIALTIS and Oli from SNOB...is not how they would ever describe themselves. It's cold and pasty post-punk in a suitably spare and unwelcoming vein. Singer Luke knows about conveying hate without shouting and doesn't let his love of Morrissey anywhere near this band, but huddles over the mic like he wants to be your personable intellectual Joey Ramone. Their demo tape is out and can be listened to here: farsofar.bandcamp.com.

I made a festival called First Timers where every band plays their first show, usually with at least one member who is new to their instrument. Amongst many other great bands, one formed this year called SCRAP BRAIN, which caught my eye and ear. The band is made from Ben, who scratches intensely at a left-handed guitar that keeps falling apart, Tamsin's fluttering concrete-block fills which she insists are "super simple" and Joe, whose usually more comfortable writing about bands than playing in them, shredding away on bass. There's a natural punk force to their sound that's elevated to something sublime by what's being said by Camille, up front. Watching them record, it strikes me as it has before that punk's most vital possibility is this: where we have rough edges, parts that feel serrated, not quite fixed, it allows us to jigsaw into each other. Two months after their debut at First Timers, I'm in a room full of power tools and sawdust, our half-built practice room, stood with my back to Camille, the singer of the band, who is both ten years younger and ten times stronger than me. Her voice feels like its hitting my in the back as I record it, laughing at myself for even bothering with a pop shield as it peaks and sucks the air out of the the whole room. The song is called "Bored of this Personality Disorder." There is little room for poetry here because it's hardcore, and each word is spat out like a curse. "*HY P ER VI G IL AN CE / COGNITIVE DISSONANCE / DIS A SSOC IATION.*" She thunders out her diagnoses not pausing for breath, not asking for anything, just narrating reality. They recorded just a few minutes of music because really, who needs more? Sat there struck dumb, I am momentarily sad that they will likely not be offered shows with bands who capitalize the H in Hardcore like it's a private island resort, because the bluster and pose of that island does not always hold the door open for difficult bands that stick in your chest like this. There are groups that have forced their way in to the frame by sheer force of will, though, and SCRAP BRAIN could well be one.

Another new band called ES shares the Tammy T-Beat from SCRAP BRAIN with Katy (aka The Voice) from GLOSS REJECTION and two members of PRIMETIME (another killer First Timers alumnus.) This is guitar-free gloomth that strings and lurches around with synth and Maria's howled pronouncements, her slight Scandi-inflections mixed with warbly bass so the whole thing comes off a bit XMAL DEUTSCHLAND, albeit devoid of swing, harrowing and cold. Nothing's alright. (Nothing is fine...) Ideal soundtracks to having no fun, staring into space, secrets and lives. I believe they have some type of record on La Vida Es Un Mus pretty soon, don't miss it.

FRIEND OR FOE

Right now I work for a Rape Crisis center going out to schools across the city delivering sex and relationships workshops. Every young person I have ever worked with is many things at once: a wound up ball of possibilities, scared, hurting, wildly real, acting out, holding it in, pushing. Sometimes in a session, we offer them post-it notes to ask questions they maybe can't speak about. I asked a thirteen-year-old boys' group today to give me any question they liked. Like never before, this led to a strangely secret degradation as I read what they had chosen to ask me. They chose to ask, variously: Am I a virgin (c'mon); if I enjoyed anal sex (honestly more than some people but also less than a lot of people); what's my favourite position (compromised). The world has told them they should take every chance they get, that power can be their currency, so the theory goes that through writing they have an opportunity to be fragile, in a world that demands so much machismo and bluster from them. It takes a big man to give that up.

In the girls' group, a handwritten post-it note scrawl rages at me: "Why should we trust you?" I don't have the answer. Another wants to know "how many ucks make you a sket?" My heart burns for you. I stand as usual before a sea of perfect box braids, imperfectly rolled up skirts, incongruous office worker handbags and unblended foundation. The extra hostility matches the stakes. Cynical denial is the hot air balloon that many teen girls scramble onto, float above the world that would visit violence upon them. They deny that anyone but (other) girls are to blame for their suffering. They are safer up at a distance blaming those stuck down below. This mindset helps them to separate, which is fine until they find themselves on the ground, too. I want to parachute each one of them somewhere soft outside of all this. This is called the rescue impulse and I am a bad sucker for it. But Miss, Galdem gotta keep they legs shut, you say. My heart burns for you. It's a leap too far today, for you to believe me that women do not lie about being raped, but I console myself that maybe you will take these words away and revisit them in secret, or when you need them most. I'm lost in invective, dry mouth, trying to push through the idea that there can be another world where we are free, then you remind me with your scowl that with so much to lose, it's work enough just to strategize your way through.

CRUCIAL CHANGES

The last few months I've been working on the process of becoming obsolete. This is because I'm moving to live in Australia for a while, which will be weird because I know less than ten people there. I like creating life situations that simulate the dread and adrenaline of jumping off a moving train, but am hoping for a soft landing.

If you can help: bryonybeynon@gmail.com.

"Red, White and Blue the colors that we fly!
In our country we destroy the sky!
Liberty, Justice and Prosperity!
As we stay down the criminals go free!"
—COLD AS LIFE, "Red, White and Blue"

"The end of the world is coming in two!
We are ready to fight, are you?"
—COMBAT 84, "Right to Choose"

"Contemplate this on the tree of woe.
Crucify him!"
—Thulsa Doom (Darth Vader guy, not the crusties...)

You Call That Justice,
Well it Just Aint Fair

Bulls on parade! The Gang and I are about to use our five-sided fistagons on all anti-Oi! hate groups (*MMR*?!). They don't gotta burn the Oi! they just remove it! You dig? Last month (for issue #399) I wrote up a review for the new LP from Australian band, T.H.U.G. Head honcha Grace Amrbrose took umbrage at T.H.U.G's pedigree; namely that their singer, Chumley, was also in WHITE LIGHTNING, a white power band from New South Wales that broke up in 1988 (...fitting). T.H.U.G covers the WHITE LIGHTNING song "We Rule" which adds to the nose-wrinkling of my editors. As of this writing I'm not sure if the review has been scrapped or if it went to print. I hope it made it to print. (Just found out it didn't.) In addition to writing like a snail on dope and wasting time on jokes that won't be seen I'd rather not edit myself (or be edited) based on conjecture. Is T.H.U.G a WP band? No. Is T.H.U.G a nationalist band? No. Do their lyrics touch on patriotism? Still no, in fact nothing in the band's lyrical content is suspicious. If I were to cull my record collection (or iPod...lez be real) of all sketch-affiliated oi! I'd have to get rid of the majority of the first wave of skinhead bands (the horror!). Say goodbye to 4-SKINS, VICIOUS RUMOURS, SECTION 5, ABH, THE BUSINESS, COMBAT 84, CONDEMNED 84, ANTISOCIAL, LAST RESORT, and on. And don't get me started on those milquetoast punks who think ANGELIC UPSTARTS and MENACE should be shunned because of their songs, "England" and "GLC" respectively. Wimps and poltroons! You deserve neither safety nor freedom. Go listen to SHEER MAG...or I don't know...TODD RUNDGREN?

I'm not here to make excuses for any band; T.H.U.G can (and has) spoken for themselves on the matter (hint: they're not apologetic). And that seems to be the problem MRR Editorial has with T.H.U.G: They have not asked for forgiveness. The band has been forthright about their past but they haven't said, "Sorry."

Oi! in its creation was a conservative offshoot of punk and that's something for each person to figure out if they give a shit about or not. My own inclination is to shrug it off. I'm in the camp of French philosopher and critic Roland Barthes when it comes to writing reviews: I look at the work, not the author behind the work. But as Pope Girl pointed out in a conversation, I'm a "white, cis-gendered, straight male." I puked in my mouth a little, but I think I got her point: Something about checking my privilege. Though, I've caught her reading Rudyard Kipling so I don't know what to think.

Is it my job to filter and vet the past of every band I review? God forbid this is the only place you read about Oi! (Go West, young man!) If those in charge had their way you'd only hear about BISHOPS GREEN and HARD SKIN...wowee! I pick a wide range of new bands every month (left, center, right and "against all"). I forgo bands that are openly WP or I think will ruffle too many bangs and top-knots over at Maximum HQ (PARA-ELITE and DR. MARTINS from Brazil are two recent examples). But everything else is good to go. Most of the punks who read this magazine don't like or listen to Oi! So who cares if some nerd in Vermont (yeah, you.) reads about T.H.U.G and never listens to them and never knows of their horrid past? And what's the damage if that same nerd listens to T.H.U.G and goes digging and finds out about the skreevy scrumbly side of '80s RAC? Are we trying to keep people from forming an opinion? I understand *Maximum Rocknroll* takes an editorial stance against featuring outright racist bands. But can it take that same stance against obliquely quasi-racist individuals? Seems like a boring road to travel. I'd rather just listen to some goddamn Oi! Onwards!

OLD FIRM CASUALS – *A Butchers Banquet* CD / 12" (Oi! The Boat / Randale): Lars and the dudes have put out another release your younger brother has probably already illegally downloaded. (Good job!) OFC have their sound down... So for those in the know who like this band you shouldn't be disappointed. For those of you coming out of a coma or a convent, OLD FIRM CASUALS is Lars Frederiksen's (ya know, from RANCID) Oi! band. I'll call it Oi! like I call Toby Keith country. There's no disputing it, it's just not that fun to admit. Most of the songs on *A Butchers Banquet* sound like RANCID playing Oi! Which you think I would enjoy becuz I'm still fourteen, but I don't enjoy this. It's boring and comes across as a forgery. Like when SHAM put out *The Game*. Hang it up boyos! We don't want your bones, and you can please go home. Ignore this and go listen to any Oi! band from Brazil.

OLDFASHIONED IDEAS – *Another Side to Every Story* LP (Contra): Yes! Swedish UK82 / Oi! full of hooks and catchy chorus that doesn't drop the beat once! This trio from Malmö understands how to write a raging punk song in 2016. There is female backing on a bunch of the tunes (my favorite being "Northern Lights"). You get fifteen tracks sung in English that breathe fresh air into straightforward topics: ponx and skinz uniting, living for the day, losing love, friendship, fighting the system, staying punk in a changing un-punk world, fighting nazis... Ya get the picture. Here's some words from the song, "Fuck Off": *"Fuck off! We don't want you here! / You threaten one of us you threaten us all! / Nazi scum! Ooh, ooh Fuck off! / You started this war, we'll act in self-defence!"* This is top-ten material. For fans of: Working punx, skins in painted leathers, yellow laces in beat-up boots, German beers, Tri-hawks and OXYMORON butt-flaps.

STRIKE BACK – *Alone in Battle* 12" (Fierro!): The trio of Madridoids are back with their knuckle-down brand of gruff Oi! On this salty slab you get four songs that run around the turntable at 45 rpms. Side A kicks things off with the battle anthem "Do or Die." It's a song about standing strong in the face of monumental odds. "Traitor" is a gruff indictment of those who turn their backs on friends and the havoc they cause. Side B contains the only song sung in Spanish, "Bien Atado," which I think is about Franco's time in power, but I'm not sure cuz I'm too lazy to translate it. It's good tho. Probably the slowest song on the EP. The band wraps things up with "Oi! Strikes Back." At first listen I was under the impression it was another love song to Oi! How wrong I was, this is Pope Girl's new anthem, *"Oi! when you just wake up! / Oi! when you go to work! / Oi! And when you come back home? Oi! Oi! Oi! / Oi! It's fucking everywhere! / Oi! I'm getting sick of this! / Oi! Some one stop this shit! / Oi! Oi! Oi!"* The singer goes on to say that if the inundation of Oi! and skins keeps up he's selling his Ben Shermans and

throwing away his boots, and he's going to become a mod. Youth-cult devolution!? Seems pretty drastic. We here at Gang HQ find that simply writing a few bad reviews for wimpy Oi! satiates any ill-feelings towards the genre. (Thanks again *MRR*!)

GLORY BOYS – *Su Democracia* EP (Hostile Class / This Means War): GLORY BOYS were a band from Valencia, Spain. They broke up a few years ago? The back of the EP says these tracks were recorded "sometime in 2012." Their sound is very much in the vein of other hard Spanish bands that utilize metallic guitar leads like ULTIMO ASALTO, SHAVED DOGS (who share the same vocalist, Nestor), ALTA TENSION (whose song, "Ciudadano Engañado" the band covers), and the not-to-be-Googled ESTIRPE IMPERIAL. The band is non-political with their lyrics on the EP dealing with the decline of society, the effects money has on democracy rendering it, as they say, "a farce" and mass-media spawning mass-conformity. All songs sung in their native tongue. The gang recommends tracking down their full-length, *Skinhead Resistance* that came out on Dim Records back in 2010. Maravilloso! For fans of: Real Oi!, IRON MAIDEN opening for the COCKNEY REJECTS and flares on the terraces.

BRUTE FORCE – *The War is Ours ('88 Demos)* 12" (United Riot): United Riot has done a mighty service to all aficionados of American Oi! and NYHC! BRUTE FORCE is a band who has been clouded in mystery for three decades. They were one of the first Oi! bands in NYC and played with the likes of WARZONE, BIOHAZARD, ANTI-HEROS, FORCED REALITY, and the BRUISERS. They recorded a demo in '88 but broke up soon after. A few years later they resurfaced with a new singer and a new set of far-right politics. We're not concerned with that portion of the band's history. What the Gang and I are excited about is the newly remastered five-song demo tape that previous to now had been bootlegged and only available in horrible quality from dodgy distributers on CD-R. The sound of the new masters is top-quality. New bands take note! The songs on the 12" are: "We Don't Burn," "Unsung Heroes," "Out of the Ashes," "The Warriors," and "Join the Boys." The lyrics are typical for the time, place and crowd: Aggressive gang mentality with a spattering of Nationalism and xenophobia. Nothing too shocking, but it might make some readers blush. From "The Warriors": *"A free nation is what we're fighting for / To defend our threats from our golden shores / To defend our right to maintain our order / Defend our right to maintain the border!"* The other songs mostly deal with skinhead life in New York in the '80s ("To the mean streets I pledge allegiance / Every time I raise my fist!") If you are at all interested in classic NYHC you'd be remiss to pass on this release based on lyrics written by a teenager over 30 years ago. I'd issue the same caveat to skins, or people interested in American Oi!, but I know y'all don't give a shit. Essential.

That wraps it up! I still didn't get to the STRONG ISLAND BOOTBOYS / SKIN DISORDER split...Next month? We've also got a few things in the pipeline from Atlanta, Some yob-pop from Spain and a little slab of glam / Oi! from the Bay Area. Until they tell me I won't be back, we're still the new breed!

ENDNOTES:

1) We love Oi! and we hate peace: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) Understand the Gang well: We don't care who the next president will be (my vote goes to Hoxton Tom). Under the sensible iron-loafer of HRC or the ruddy-tan sun-wheel of Mein Trumpf I'll be at work 7:00 AM Monday morning. The only way you could get me into a voting booth (other than the offer of a free Dairy Queen Blizzard) is if Oi! was in danger of being banned. Who is the pro-Oi! candidate?

3) The Gang and I want to know whether the readers of this *magazine* care about the past of a band's members. I'm working the sides out in my own head. The TEMPLARS said it best: *"Simple reason to pacify simple minds / In life easy answers are often hard to find / Some things defy logic no matter what you say / Real life's not black and white but many shades of grey."*

There's an immense dissatisfaction and a pervading feeling of dread. Brutality is the watchword of the day, in the ugly little theatres that make up this vicious world.

Me—I was born with a tremendous erection and a very, very stupid brain.

The way things are looking it's likely I'll die with my life defined by those same two defects. My form is outrageous and grotesque and my head hurts almost all of the time. I jerk between bouts of incredible action, where every move I make is correct and all things fall into place and I see a purpose and am able to hurtle towards it and this bizarre, molasses drudgery where I can't do anything but wipe my nose and spit.

Most times I feel like I just drank a thousand cups of coffee. I hustle around my little broken-down desk, and the drawers slide out too quick when I'm going through them and all my stupid shit spills out onto the floor. I start to clean up and them and am seized with worries about money. I get to thinking about the nature of work, my alienation and the spiritual nadir I seem to heading toward. Get worried about that. I turn on the news, like an idiot, and see incredible violence erupting like rotten pimples and spraying all over the greasy earth. My god! Then I must sit and close my eyes and try to relax and try to imagine good things.

This is my dream: I'm lying on my back like a snake in the sun. Red dirt. Red brick. Smells good, tree smells, I like it. Xanax, maybe a little heroin. Pretty girls but I'm not bothered.

Ah! Wake up, you little prick! Dreams are for idiots and donkey boys. I'm both of those things of course but I should be at least smart enough to deny myself the dumb pleasure of these warm but ultimately harmful and useless reveries. The mind must be kept focused, must be honed, and must be stripped of the chaff and left to cool in the freezer. Too much clutter! Does everybody think like this? Twenty-two hours a day of anxious lunacy and maybe two of placid cool headedness.

Maybe two, three times a day, all of a sudden, a great wave of hopelessness will rise up and swallow me and I'll be locked in it's jaws until I can find a way to wriggle myself free. Sometimes I can't, of course, and I lie around with hanging eyes about to bust into tears for no big reason that I can figure. I can't say for certain what does it. I know this sounds stupid but I think it's the state of the world.

Some mornings I wake up and think perhaps I should shoot somebody important. Stupid thoughts! I close my eyes again but anxiety shoos me out of bed to smoke half a pack of Marlboros before 9:00 AM. Who could have thought I'd be this broken down and sick to the soul by age 26?

No doubt like a great many of you I grew up thinking that I was born too late. Punk had its heyday in the late '70s and early '80s; I was a teen in the 2000s, just some bumbling boot-wearing jackass listening to old records and pretending that every poorly attended show I went to was like those old huge Circle

Jerks gigs back in 1982. I did a lot of wishing when in my teens. I didn't like reality—in fact I was terrified by it—so I dreamt myself into an earlier world where the things I liked were new and exciting and terrifying to the Reagan-era versions of the people I hate.

An insane worldview although I don't think a terribly uncommon one. I was dissatisfied with my reality so I imagined myself in another one. Now, of course, I have real reasons for my alienation and delirious hate but my brain is so broken that I'm unable to wish myself to another time. Things are no longer boring; on the other hand, they're absolutely terrifying.

But it is undeniable *that there is something in the air*. Something is changing; what, exactly, I couldn't tell you, but if you can't sniff it out your nose is broken. There's a weirdness seeping throughout our world, a wildness that I can't quite get straight. Coup in Turkey, then the AKP runs crazy through the streets. Mass shootings reaching a fever pitch in the US. Madmen writing up new trade agreements and throwing the workers to the pits.

Theory and praxis won't save us, I don't think. It's going to take something calamitous to jar the world out of the frothing madness that's overtaking it, and that something is going to knock the spit out of our mouths. The cultural Chekists and the ugly Trump boys won't stand a chance, I don't reckon, against our creeping inexorable fate.

(Do me a favor. Write a thousand words on Hegel. Talk to me of Heidegger while you jam a knitting needle down the hole in my cock. My God. I want to know some things before I'm ground to dust.)

My whole life looks like it has been strung together by strings. They're fraying and looking like shit. I don't know what to tell you. Perhaps I'm projecting my own dissatisfaction upon the state of the world, but I don't think so, not really. I'm too dumb to be anything but a minor reflection of the state of things.

The mad KSA bomb the Houthis into dust. Islamists, armed and wild, will fight white nationalists, armed and wild. Corporate states might intervene. And where will we be? Where we always are! Stuck on the sidelines—but I'm afraid those sidelines might blur and we'll be thrust into the thick of it and lie dying in the streets.

Christ, I hope I'm full of shit like I usually am. I pray I'm an insane liar writing bullshit for idiots. This column is rambling and insipid but I'm communicating what I feel is true and I'm not trying to be melodramatic like I usually maybe am.

This isn't about anything, I don't have a purpose to this, I'm just trying to describe some of the anxiety that is infecting I think most people out there. At least it's got me, I don't know, maybe it's got you too. I hope it hasn't got you and that it never will.

Then again, the sheer terror boys are at it again…

Watch out. We're fair game. The future will be written in thick, crude strokes all crooked and ugly and it will be inked with the blood of the likes of you and me.

I was born with a tremendous erection and I'll die with a dick wilted like spinach. The new millennium, still in its painful birthings, seem to promise a sick child that will die of madness and dysentery before it can even walk.

I'm sitting on a Greyhound bus, leaving Cleveland. It's running late and there's a good chance I'll miss the connecting bus from Buffalo to Toronto. I was only visiting for 24 hours, getting in Saturday afternoon but having to be back in Canada for work Monday morning, with or without sleep. VANILLA POPPERS got asked to be the local support for RADIOACTIVITY's Cleveland show. I've been jamming both the self-titled and *Silent Kill* records every day at work for the last eight months, so saying yes to the show was a no-brainer even though I'd only just been in Cleveland three weeks prior to play at their annual punk party, *Not Horrible Fest*.

I worked Friday night and pulled an all-nighter to get a 6:00 AM bus to Cleveland the day of the show, managing to get some shut eye for at least part of the trip. Arriving in my destination city, I found my way to local transit to get to the Yellow Ghetto, my home here and accommodation for most punk bands that tour through to play a show at Now That's Class, located right next door. I got there and everyone was at work or in and out, doing their own thing. Larry stopped by to sell me a DARVOCETS t-shirt I'd missed out on during my last trip. House resident and VANILLA POPPERS guitarist, Jo, showed me the tracks they'd recorded for the VP tour tape I was putting out for our three-week stint across the US this August. He had just gotten off work, so while he pulled himself together I went next door to Class for a drink. It was 5:00 PM and the bar had just opened its doors for the night. My initial plan was to not drink because of the meds I was on from a hospital visit a week earlier, but I was in Cleveland and those good intentions were quickly thrown out the window.

Jo came over to collect me and together we did my vocal tracks in the basement of the house. Time was getting on. We were due to load into Mahalls, the bowling alley and music venue where the show would be tonight, but we still hadn't practiced. Drew arrived at the house but Steve hasn't surfaced from his room for a few hours. I ran up the stairs to the second level and knocked loudly on his door until a groggy voice responded. Back down in the basement I wrote out a set list, we burnt through it once they'd set up (and smoked a bowl), then packed back up and loaded out gear into the van. We were on our way to the bowling alley, only a five-minute drive away.

I'd never played this venue before and was anxious from the idea of not playing to the usual Cleveland crowd at Class, although a large amount of regulars ended up coming over for the show anyway. Also, I was super excited to be supporting and getting to see RADIOACTIVITY, their tunes I'd spun hundreds of times while slaving away in the kitchen back at my Toronto job. I had stashed some coke in the house after Not Horrible Fest and out of nerves, sat in the back of the van with the gear while on the way to the venue, not even bothering to try snort it but literally just eating the remainder while the guys travelled in the front. I don't know why I thought it would do anything to help my anxiety but we got there and I tumbled out of the back doors a stupid mess, my face numb and floppy. We loaded in and I spent the next hour walking around in circles, bouncing off walls, spewing verbal garbage to anyone that would listen, sipping on Long Island Iced Teas and trying not to pull my hair out. The basement show space was dimly lit with fair lights, a tiny bar facing an even smaller stage with the sound of pins crashing from the room over while people slowly started making their way down for the show.

We were the only local support and went on just before 10:00 PM. Fifteen minutes later it was over. I spent the rest of the night fretting the set had been a dud, which is what I do every time we play anyway. We still don't have a lot of songs and played almost all of them, a mix of demo songs and tracks to be released. Drew's kit fell apart during the first song. Steve's head was playing up

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before practice, so he was using a different one, which emitted a different sound than usual. My vocals were quiet so turned them up halfway through the set, then fell over a speaker Drew was using to keep his kit in place. The crowd stood and watched at a safe distance. It was what it was.

I chatted to some people after the set then escaped outside for some air, if nicotine counts as air anyway. Jo and Richard were getting pizza from Little Caesar's a block away. I was fried and frazzled and followed them like a stray dog. My anxiety and the set had worn me thin. And probably the coke and alcohol had some part in that too. They bought cheese pizza each, I mindlessly ate three doughy slices with the cheese ripped off.

BAD SPORTS were on. I stood up front for a few songs enjoying the tunes but not previously familiar with their material, then disappeared outside again. I still hadn't settled down properly post-set. I did like them more live than what I'd heard recorded which was just a bit too clean for my taste.

RADIOACTIVITY was on next and last. It was BAD SPORTS being the backing band for Jeff, so good on them playing two sets a night for this tour. I stood up front and danced along to every stupid song and knew every one off by heart, a mix of the two albums and a MARKED MEN song too. They grooved out to their tunes, the crowd nodding their heads in appreciation, some people pushing each other around, for the most part seeming sterile but who the fuck cares, I got to see RADIOACTIVITY!

At the end of last year I'd emailed RADIOACTIVITY asking if I could interview them for my fanzine, with Jeff replying saying he would oblige. But researching them, they'd already done a bunch of interviews and I struggled to think of anything new or interesting to ask, eventually letting it fall by the wayside and putting the next issue together without it. When VANILLA POPPERS got asked to play their show in Cleveland, I thought it would be cool to do a live interview and talk about their tour, recent RADIOACTIVITY happenings and whatever else. But he never got back to me about it. I saw him at the show and wanted to go up and talk to him but was getting too much in my head about it and couldn't work up the nerve to approach him. So I didn't and I was disappointed in myself for letting dumb insecurities get in the way of something as simple as walking up to someone and talking to them.

The set finished and I exited the venue. We all hung out the front and dawdled around a bit, then took off in the van to go back to the house and drink at Class (where the drinks are bigger and cheaper and all our friends are there too!). I was in and out of the house and bar chatting to people. A metal show that had been going on there that night loaded out, and I watched the security guard beat the shit out of some drunk dude that been lurking around annoying him. I tried staying up as late as I could to hang with my friends but I hadn't slept much the night before and it was catching up to me, I crashed out around 3:00 AM. Others living in the house stayed up to wait for KALEIDOSCOPE from NY to come into town. They were driving straight to Cleveland from the show they'd played that night in Athens, and were playing a show in Cleveland the next night.

I woke up to bodies sleeping outside my bedroom door. It was time for me to exit this brief stint back home and return to the nine to five in the land of the six.

It's the 400th issue which is a lot. Been here for a while. Thanks again Layla, you should know that one of the few things I'm proud of is that you invited me on board. Thanks for Lydia for making me feel special on editing late nights (thanks to planet earth to waking up when on the other side of the world punx were still blasting their brains). To Grace for those non-business e-mails, please keep them coming, I love them. Sorry Mariam that I puked on your drummer; Ray, I almost booked your band and it would have been fun; Brendan, I'm going to cook you a dinner soon; Hey Francesca, thanks for dubbing me the second Sonskull record on tape; Eli thanks for the pins and everyone else for keeping this zine alive. This is a lot more than just a bunch of cretins typing about shit music. Radikalism is the only way and legacy worth more than temporary fame. Work silently on loud things. Serve no authority. They say those who cannot do it teach it. *MRR* teaches no one, it just does punk.

And now here is an interview with Robin from the Berlin band PISS. I met Robin for the first time in Berlin when I visited a friend. He was introduced as Swedish Robin and liked my pálinka, which is a lowbrow moonshine. He was talking about how he loves raw, noisy hardcore and had some sort of leopard jacket. A few years later I booked his band in a small rehearsal room. Since then he has been here a lot of times and I was in Berlin hanging with him maybe even more. This year they are going to play Not Dead Yet fest and people started paying attention to their band—which is a logical sort of behavior since they are fucking amazing. This was supposed to be a real interview—column interviews don't count—but the other members did not care to answer which is funny and cool.

All of you came from different countries to Berlin. Some of you grew up in Sweden and one of you in Spain. What were your main stations on your way to becoming the punk person you are now? What were the main musical scenes that influenced you?
My family went to Amsterdam when I was about five and I remember seeing a punk with a safety pin pierced through his ear and I thought it was *sooo* brutal. It really impressed / scared me. I think it was the thrill that made me curious about punk. Later on when I was fourteen or something my school got a new music teacher, he was a punk. He showed me this place in town where you could learn how to play music in a band, where you could borrow all the gear and stuff. It was great, became my second home. It made me cooler in school too, cause all of a sudden I was this person in a band. *[laughs]*

The town was way too small to have any different kind of scenes. Anyone who was into any kind of mainstream hating activity was lumped up together: punks, goths, metalheads freaks, or just people that liked to screw things up. Was fun. I remember becoming friends with this gang of kids from the next village who used to collect dog shit to smear in phone booths and to paint upside down crosses on churches. Was good times.

What were your reasons to become punk?
To let out the anger and hate towards society, school and all this shit. The danger. That's why I hate the fucking "cozy-punks" who comfortably nod their heads smiling listening to melodic punk. It fuckin' sucks. In my eyes it defeats the whole purpose of punk when there's no attitude, anger or danger in it. The only good thing about that kind of shit is that it fuels the fire inside of me.

I read somewhere that Berlin used to be a place where people came to make art but nowadays it's only a place where people want to sell their art. Is it an inspiring place or rather a great opportunity to make your sounds heard?
Yeah I think that's pretty much true. Berlin

is changing fast. It used to be very easy to scrape by not having to bother so much with society. Now rents are getting way higher so it gets harder to not have a real job etc. For me, Berlin is great to have a band in because there are so many good cool venues to play and also because of its position. It's close to so many countries around. It feels way more that you're a part of Europe here than when you live in Sweden.

I also read it's a place where you don't have to prove that you want to be a local. How open was the local punk scene to you guys?
Yes. There are so many people from all over the world. It doesn't really feel like you're living in Germany, Berlin is a bubble on its own. I've felt like it's very easy to get connected to the scene here.

How do you spend your days? Do you work? How do you survive? Is it usual that you wandering through a town with a blasting boombox totally drunk?
How do we escape real life you mean? I've live in a rehearsal room for a while now. That helps. As I said rents are getting ridiculous so it's kind of a protest. I'm hiding here now. Do some small jobs here and there. It's always just a bit random. Both me and {er have this job on the internet where you can work when and where you want. Just klick. It's really boring but you never have to feel forced to go to work when you don't feel like it. And yes to the drunk boom box, haha! At least in summer.

You came from very prolific scenes of international hardcore. What were the things that you brought with yourself and what did you want to leave behind you?
When I left Sweden I didn't feel so much as part of a scene actually. There are a lot of good bands coming from there but at the time I didn't feel so connected. I've started feeling more connected here in Berlin somehow. But what I brought with me was better music taste I guess, haha. I had been to Berlin a few times and I really enjoyed the no rules vibe. I had started getting really restless and annoyed by the strict rules in Sweden so I just felt like I had to get out of there.

How did this band form? What were the pacts that you made?
I was hanging in the bar of Köpi one night and they put on Shitlickers, I started moshing and I saw a girl across the room doing the same. We bonded over having the same taste so I told her we had to start a band. Patricia had never played an instrument before but she bought a bass and was ready to shred it. I asked Per to drum which he also never had done before. I thought it would be perfect. It's more about the taste rather than about the skill.

There was never a pact made, we can trust each other. We have this distortion plus bond thing—we usually stay up on tour until everyone's gone and then we put on our own music and go crazy to it.

How was it to learn to play through this band? How do it impact the creative process of writing songs?
I'm the only one who had played my instrument before but its like a good rule of thumb for me. Don't write songs that are too complicated for the others to play. At least it was like that in the beginning. Like "ah ok this riff needs to be simplified." I think it makes it better. Now though we've gotten way better but we have found a way of songwriting that fits for us.

Your lyrics are not in English nor they are in German. I don't know how known the Swedish language is where you live but it seems like you also just care about relief not about dictating your view of the world. This brings the focus on your music. What does your music say to the audience?
Most lyrics are in English actually! But yeah some are in Swedish, but we never really thought of it as something that was supposed to be heard. It was just for us. I didn't quite realize that other people would hear it when we did the demo. I think some of the songs I didn't even remember the lyrics when we recorded so I'm not sure what's going on there It's definitely more just about a relief.

GG Allin said something that I think is pretty spot on how I feel too—our music is not made to entertain, it's made to annihilate.

Why is it important to you to create music?
It's physical, I just need to shred.

It's hard to see your shows without you drinking beer instead of playing solos, falling around, and such. What is that you want from a show that you play?
To let it out.

How's the local scene? For a long time Berlin seemed like a place where bands played but there weren't that many local bands. Nowadays it seems like Germany is providing many cool new groups.
Yeah, it's weird. There have been so many good bands coming through to play here but not so many good local bands. There are a few more good bands now. Many of these bands have very mixed nationalities. Berlin is full of drunk punx. I guess it's not as much focus on the music here. It's more about making a mess. It can be fun at shows but it's not as often you see people sing-along and knowing what's going on as you see in other places. I like the mess though.

It's very rare for a hardcore band like you to have a discography that is more than two EPs. It seems to be a formula that bands form, record a demo, a 7" and break up. Such a short lifespan does not allow bands to go on tours and play as much they want. For me it seems more of a recording of a specific idea. On the other hand you guys seem to tour a lot and record very little. What is your relation to both? How do you look on recording and touring? What is more important to you: creating something long-standing or collecting memories?
Yeah, it's not necessary to exist much longer I think. You can if you want but bands now can get an instant hype with only a demo so it can be pretty quick. Demo stage is the peak if a good hardcore band's career I think. From there on it's just how long you can make the sinking ship last. We have been pretty stupid in terms of recording I think. We have just been too restless. It's never been as appealing to stay at home to record as it has been to go play somewhere so it's always been pushed a side. It hasn't been a plan or anything it's just how it happened. I'm not really good at collecting memories but I'm also not sure about lasting long. I think it's gotta be there and then.

What does the future hold for you?
We're just about to finish recording our second 7" and then it would be great if we could go tour the US. Alternative answer… Get a time machine and go backwards. Back home to the '80s.

wearepiss.bandcamp.com

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

Imogen Goes To Los Angeles Part 2
Day Negative A Little Over A Thousand
A little over a thousand days before I move to LA —I want to say June 6th, 2013—I go

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off hormones. Alex and I have been together since like 2006, we've moved across the country a bunch of times, and we're ready to be someplace for a long time and have babies. It's magic: because I have never been able to afford The Surgery that is supposed to define you as a person when you're trans (and ask yourself: do you have almost forty thousand dollars lying around? Do you think you'd be able to come up with it if you had to? Do you think you'd be able to come up with it if you came out as trans and found yourself suddenly a lot less able to get or stay employed?) and because hormone replacement therapy suppresses but does not eradicate a body's ability to produce gametes, Alex and I are in the mythical position of being two women who can create a baby together from our own bodies. I've been on hormones for something like eight years but it is only supposed to take three to six months before a body starts to produce viable gametes again.

I attend the Lambda Literary Awards where *The Collection*, an anthology that I have a story in, wins in the Transgender Fiction category. A few of us give a speech onstage. I mispronounce the word "boycott." The next day, I stop taking hormones.

Day One

I walk around the corner from our hotel to CBS studios, overwhelmed. Being in a writer's room is surreal and fun. It doesn't feel like a job. Or: it feels like the most bourgeois job imaginable, the one most removed from the means of any kind of production. I pick a fight with an executive producer who wants the trans character in our show to spend some time talking about her genitalia; he pretty quickly concedes to me, though, despite my position as possibly the staff writer with the least Hollywood clout in history. He and I will go on to be friends, though. Weeks later, I wonder whether this was an accidental "on your first day in prison, pick a fight with the biggest guy you can find" scenario. This biggest guy was a writer for *Hart To Hart*, though.

After work, Alex and I get sushi. I forget my debit card in an ATM.

Day Two

Before work, I go to the bank whose ATM that ate my card. They inform me that, because I don't have an account at their bank, my card was automatically destroyed. Stoked, I call my bank back on the east coast, who promise to get me a new debit card within ten business days.

I go to work. Alex buys me a bunch of food to have in my hotel room.

One of the reasons she flew out to LA with me is that she's supposed to ovulate any day. We had a miscarriage about a year ago, but we have not yet managed to get a pregnancy to work. Because going off hormones is kind of a nightmare—basically, I have completely lost touch with myself emotionally and physically—our initial timeframe for getting pregnant was a year. At one year, we stretched it to two; at two years, we stretched it to three. This is the last cycle, the last month we're going to try. We've talked about it a lot: even if we don't get pregnant this month, I'm going back on hormones and we're going to find a donor.

But she hasn't ovulated yet. We get pizza, she leaves for the Bay, and I'm alone in a hotel room in Los Angeles with a bottle of Maker's Mark Alex bought me and no weed card, because apparently in the fascist state of California you need a California ID to get a weed card. There's a weed store right around the corner! But I drink whiskey and watch TV.

Alex gets to the Bay and starts ovulating immediately.

Day Three

I go to another day of TV writing and then immediately take a plane up to the Bay. Alex—the competent one—has worked out all the logistics. We have a midwife friend who we've known for almost as long as we've been together. We go to her place and inseminate, do some lezzie witchcraft stuff, eat pizza, and then pass out at in Geyl's little house in the backyard of Queens in Berkeley.

Day Four

Alex walks me to the train and I fly back to LA first thing in the morning. Or: I get to the airport just in time to spend four hours reading *Spawn* comics on my tiny laptop while my plane is delayed. It'll be a month and a half until I get to see my girlfriend again.

Noel'le, Alyssa, Ruby and Nick are here; they're on tour with Told Slant and the Hotelier (and one other band whose name I forgot, I think? Sorry!) The venue is a block away from the only other place I know in LA, a bookstore called Stories where I read with Ryka Aoki and Everett Maroon three years ago on book tour.

After Loone plays, I get to hang out with Noel'le and the rest of Loone and some of the Told Slants. They are great. I don't know the punks or weirdos in LA yet so it rules to have friends from home coming through. They are in road dog mode. I want to hang out with them all night—they are doing a weird acoustic show at somebody's house tonight. But I just moved to LA and live in a hotel and spent all day in the airport and need to buy a car in the morning so I bail, wish them a great rest of tour, and had back to home sweet hotel.

Day Five

One of the things everybody will tell you about LA is that you need a car.

Alex inherited a bunch of money a year or two ago, which we are putting toward a downpayment on buying a house—which I guess you could frame as a boring thing to do, but honestly, I've been broke my whole life and haven't lived in one place for more than a year or two in almost twenty years; living in a house for a long time sounds like a mind-blowing experience to me at this point. But she's taken a chunk of money out of our house down payment fund for me to get a car.

I am supposed to get hella paid for writing for TV. This is an investment.

I find a car on Craigslist—like a ten-year-old Civic or something, just something I can afford, a beater that will get me around. You and I both know that "the sharing economy" is a mean-spirited farce and actually just a new-sounding way to exploit people, but how else am I supposed to get to a car dealership? I install the Uber app on my phone and get an Uber out to fucking Long Beach or something.

I don't know what I'm doing.

I got my most recent car after completely destroying the head gasket of my second-most-recent car—a fifteen-year-old Civic which had been a gift from a friend who was upgrading to a ten-year-old Prius. My most recent car was a twelve-year-old Subaru boat that I loved because it had air conditioning and didn't feel like it might explode at any moment. But this car I was on my way to Long Beach to check out? This beater I was excited to get?

It was a piece of shit. At least according to my Uber driver, Ivan.

In order for you to give them five star ratings so that they don't get fired, Uber drivers are required to be nice to you. I don't want to exploit that, necessarily, but because he's a professional car driver guy, I ask Ivan about how people get cars.

He has very strong opinions on the subject.

In a thick Eastern European accent, he explains to me that I should never, ever pay more than three thousand dollars for a ten-year-old Civic, and that it might have been in accidents, and that basically I am going to get fucked as hell if I buy the car he is driving me out to buy.

He explains to me for a while about how to

get a used car that is not a piece of shit, and what to watch out for, and stuff like that.

"Jeez, Ivan," I say eventually. "I kind of want you to come with me and be my used car buying advocate."

"Okay," he says.

We get to the dealership in Long Beach or wherever the fuck. He gets out of the car and we walk around the lot, looking for this Civic. He finds it. He kicks the bumper. He points out scratch marks, a dent. It could've been in any number of accidents. It could be all kinds of fucked up.

"You do not buy this car," he tells me.

So we go back to his car. I try to summon him through the Uber app; it keeps summoning someone else, though, so I'm like "lemme just pay you sixty bucks to drive me back to the hotel."

He agrees. But when we get near the hotel, I still don't have a car. I ask him where to go for a car. He drives me to Van Nuys and drops me off at a lot. Immediately, he spies an old Volkswagen or something. Kicks the bumper.

"Great car," he says. "You buy this one."

He drives off. The used car salesman comes over and sees the Uber logo in the window of Ivan's car. Incredulously, he asks:

"Did you just take an Uber to the car dealership?"

"Nah," I say. "Of course not. That's my friend. Ivan."

The car Ivan told me to buy does not start.

I buy a twelve-year-old Volvo.

Day 7

Searching for "queer" in the craigslist housing sections returns exactly one room. It's amazing. I move into it.

Day 11

Actress Laverne Cox shows up in the writers room for half an hour. She is unimpressed with my ideas for her character but luckily she has better ones.

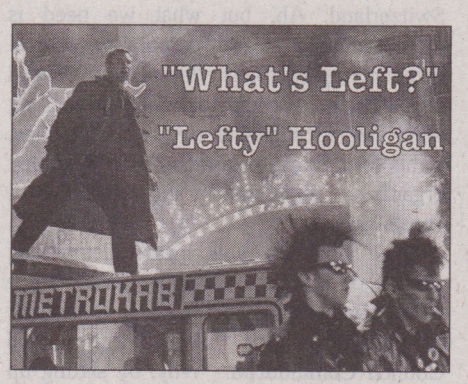
Day 18

Alex gets her period. I've been off hormones for three years, with all the things I don't want to talk about here or anywhere else that that implies, and it didn't work. Luckily, the emotional numbness I cultivated when I was young and trying not to be trans, which receded for a while but has been back while I've been off hormones because bodies can time travel within themselves, it cushions me from feeling too fucked up. I mean I cancel plans and bail on friends and go home to curl into a ball on the air mattress that leaves me in pain all day every day—I am too old to be moving across the country and living on floors—but I still don't have access to the part of myself that is able to cry.

Which is disappointing.

ENDNOTES:

1. Dude's name was not really Ivan. He just rules and I don't want him to get in trouble. I bet the higher-ups at Uber are big *MRR* readers.
2. I'm writing this on the 4th of July in a coffee shop in LA. I have a clear memory of writing a column a couple years ago in a coffee shop in Sacramento on the 4th of July, when a whole family of white people came in wearing matching Old Navy American flag t-shirts. Weirdos.



Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.
— Winston S. Churchill

If a majority voted for you to jump off a bridge—would you?
— CrimethInc., "From Democracy to Freedom"

I set the table by covering it with a dark cloth and placing a lit candelabra on it. I position my Ouija board and planchette on the table in front of the chair before I sit down. I'm ready to prognosticate.

As I write this column, it's the first week of July and both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions are happening later in the month. I predict Hillary will win the DNC and Trump the RNC. Neither party or electoral base is exactly keen on their respective nominees, but the "Bernie or Bust" or "Never Trump" crowds won't prevail. Further, I predict that Hillary will win against Trump, but it will be a close election, uncomfortably so. My final and last prediction is that the surprising surge in votes for the Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson will be to the Trump campaign what Ralph Nader was to Al Gore. Oh yeah, and there will be rioting in Cleveland in 2016 to rival Chicago 1968.

That's four predictions, four pretty obvious political forecasts on which you as the reader can score me, starting with the August issue and running through the November elections. Also, there's four months to fill commenting on the elections, tap dancing on air if you will. Because by the time my comments on what's happening right now, at this moment, reach your eyes they're already past their prime. Outdated. And as I've hinted at above, I'm not a soothsayer by any means.

One of my major annoyances with American politics is its unrelenting pettiness. Hardcore Republicans for instance purposefully call their opponents the Democrat Party, not the Democratic Party. Their rationale is that the Democratic Party is far from democratic in operation and intent, but it's clear when Republicans use Democrat Party in partisan debates they're really intending to needle and provoke their opponents. It's such elementary schoolyard antics; the wannabe tough kid insisting on calling another kid surnamed Wankel "Wanker" all the time. Far from entertaining the rest of us with clever puns, this mean-spirited sparring is debasing our language and degrading our political discourse.

The deepening clusterfuck that is Brexit follows closely behind in terms of politically humbling experiences. Who would have thought that Britain's two main political parties—the Tories and Labor—as well as the political geography encompassed by the names Great Britain and United Kingdom would be destroyed by a simple non-binding referendum of whether or not Britain should leave the European Union? As David Van Reybrouck commented in *The Guardian*: "Never before has such a drastic decision been taken through so primitive a procedure—a one-round referendum based on a simple majority. Never before has the fate of a country—of an entire continent, in fact—been changed by the single swing of such a blunt axe, wielded by disenchanted and poorly informed citizens." (6-29-16) As the political edifice of the United Kingdom continues to crumble, threatening the EU in the process, the efficacy of elections and liberal democracy are in serious doubt.

Let's start with the word democracy. The term comes from the ancient Athenian practice of the adult males of the city-state (the *demos*) gathering in assembly to directly vote on all civic matters and leadership. Right away we understand the qualified nature of the word because the right to vote did not apply to women, children or slaves, a limitation shared by that other classical political system from which the West draws its inspiration: the practice of the Roman

republic. The complex property-based system in ancient Rome (collective voting for magistrates and tribunes) provided for an indirect, representative form of government where the franchise continued to expand as Rome itself grew, encompassing allies and conquered peoples, until the original republic mutated into an empire ruled by Caesars. The more geographically prescribed scope of Athenian democracy did not prevent that city-state from acquiring an empire however, nor from devolving into oligarchy under decades of war.

For America's founding political elite steeped in Enlightenment liberalism, there was a sharp distinction between a democracy and a republic. Pure democracy always ran the risk of despotism and imperialism, of mob rule where "51% of the people could vote to take away the toothbrushes of the other 49%" as a John Bircher once told me. By contrast, republicanism intended to contain such problems with territorially small, constitutionally-limited, mixed representative government, which was a central principle of Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. Hamilton, Jay, and Madison further argued in the Federalist Papers that the necessary limitations of a small constitutional republic could be transcended by the judicious application of legal checks-and-balances within a physically expanding domain of ever-multiplying, contending factions. Thanks to this political reformulation, the spread of the American republic across the continent and beyond was never in contradiction to or in conflict with oligarchy or empire.

But these political distinctions have been muddled and mongrelized to the point where we now think that democracy and republicanism are just the names of two different political parties, not two distinct political systems. We are told constantly "we live in a democracy," we pledge allegiance "to the Republic for which it stands," and we believe like Candide's Professor Pangloss that we live in the best of all possible worlds. Rather than remain befuddled however, let's simplify matters by saying that the West's ideal is for representative democracy in the context of a national state.

"[I]n an election, you may cast your vote, but you are also casting it away for the next few years." David Van Reybrouck of *The Guardian* writes. "This system of delegation to an elected representative may have been necessary in the past – when communication was slow and information was limited – but it is completely out of touch with the way citizens interact with each other today." We tend to fetishize elections, according to Reybrouck, while demonizing the subject of that voting, resulting in an almost universal distrust of governments, political parties, and politicians while increasing calls for a strong leader "who does not have to bother with parliament and elections." He concludes that "Democracy is not the problem. Voting is the problem."

Oh, really?

Representative democracy, from Roman republicanism to Western liberalism, doesn't seem to be the *solution* for nationalist extremism, capitalist exploitation, oligarchic despotism, colonial conquest, or imperialist appropriation. If we switch out the word nationalist for patriotic and capitalist for commercial this is true for direct democracy, from ancient Greece to the cantons of Switzerland. Ah, but what we need is more democracy; real democracy, radical democracy, participatory democracy. We need decentralized, participatory decision-making with easily recallable elected representatives, rights for minorities, rotating offices, ad hoc organizing, impermanent institutions, even consensus process.

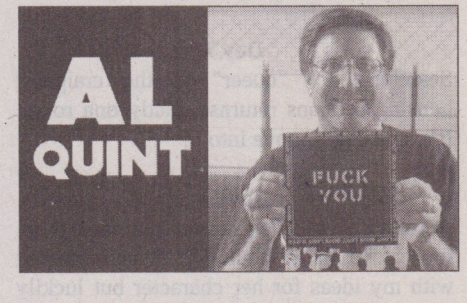
"And how do you insure democratic control of industry?" Marvin Garson once asked rhetorically, spelling out a kind of radical democratic ultra-leftism called Council Communism. "Why, by setting up workers' councils in each industry which operate with full respect for all the normal democratic procedures—especially the right to establish caucuses and factions, and the right to strike. The economy, in short, will be run the way a government is *supposed* to be run; it will be like a gigantic New Left convention—impeccably democratic and a stone drag." ("Going Beyond Democracy," 1968)

Such a tedious scenario is in no way enlivened by the absurdity of consensus process, which is nothing more than tyranny by the minority if not the individual, as CrimethInc. well grasps as the myth of unanimous rule in its provocative essay "From Democracy to Freedom." The group also understands that democracy is institutionalizing governance and state-production by its very nature. But CrimethInc's attempt to substitute autonomy for democracy and to insist on the permanence of the revolutionary moment is pure sophistry. "Thousands of us flood into the streets, finding each other in new formations that offer an unfamiliar and exhilarating sense of agency. Suddenly everything intersects: words and deeds, ideas and sensations, personal stories and world events. Certainty—finally, we feel at home—and uncertainty: finally, an open horizon. Together, we discover ourselves capable of things we never imagined." This is Trotsky's Permanent Revolution on MDMA, and much like some fantasy of permanent orgasm this raises the question: what do we do *after* the revolution when we once again have to make mundane decisions. Do we make decisions by lottery or drawing straws, by rotating onerous tasks or making each individual boss-for-a-day, even by adapting Reybrouck's concept of sortition in which a representative sampling of the population makes decisions for the whole? Let me return to Marvin Garson again.

"Every industry has its own inchoate underground of people who take pride in doing good work, who aren't in it just for the money, who get angry when their employers make them sacrifice quality for the sake of profit. Let that underground get together and suddenly a real alternative to corporate capitalism will exist. […] Perhaps it's impossible to run a steel mill or an electric power plant in a free and creative way. In that case, run it automatically."

I've made the argument that, even at its best, democracy is a stone drag by quoting Garson before. By next column, I should have plenty to say about the dueling circuses of the RNC and DNC.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA *My second novel,* 1% Free, *is finally done. I have a book launch event at 6:00 PM on Thursday, November 3 at Book Passage in the Ferry Building in San Francisco. See you there.*



NO ROOM FOR YOU

"Well we don't go there anymore
It's boarded up the doors are closed
But you remember those weekend nights
When everything was alright

Ran by youth, somewhere to go
Tell your mates, everyone you know
And all the groups you wanted to see
It was something very special for me"

—DEMOB, "No Room For You"

DIY spaces have come and gone over my 35+ years involved in Boston punk, going all the way back to the Space, a loft that served the

'77 era punk scene to Gallery East and Media Workshop, both incubators for Boston's '80s hardcore scene. Over the years there were rented halls and plenty of basements that served as alternative venues to playing often lame club shows.

The Boiler Room had quite a bit of longevity for a DIY space, lasting just a little over three years until it closed in early June—the last show was actually in late May but it wasn't intended to be and people had to scramble to move shows to other venues. Fortunately, there's still the Democracy Center, a community center near Harvard that's had shows since the early 2000s and the Cambridge Elks (AKA Hardcore Stadium), but the latter is a bit pricy to rent out and not always ideal. But it doesn't completely fill the gap left by the closure of that space and another promising Roxbury space, Non-Factory.

Non-Factory stopped doing shows shortly after the Boiler Room closed, due to the landlord renting out the space to someone else. It started last year on the second floor in the building but that part of the building got shut down for code violations. It moved downstairs to a larger spot in the basement that probably held 200 people, although I never saw it filled up.

The space was actually home to some great shows for a few years in the early 2000s, when it was known as the Berwick Research Institute or just the Berwick. It was a converted bakery building and the first floor hosted various art programs and community research and development. They had the occasional show but most of the punk shows were in the dirty, dusty basement that mainly served as a warehouse area, including boxes of hair styling products. I remember one time when a guy whose identity I'll protect (because I've constantly reminded him about it for years) had his curiosity get the best of him. He opened a jar of hair gel, reached down his pants to put some on his pubes and, less than a minute later, was jumping around in excruciating pain.

That was almost as memorable as seeing the incredible array of local, national and international bands that played there. I even saw a debate break out *during* SEVERED HEAD OF STATE's set in 2001 when Jack and Todd from SHOS got into it with a CrimethInc.-affiliated rap duo (who knew there was such a thing?). I might be a little shaky on the details because I got there late and, after all, it *has* been awhile, but the gist of it was whether or not holding a punk show there represented the beginning of the gentrification of the Dudley Square area, where the Berwick was located, or whether or not the exclusion a homeless African-American man was racist, even though the person running the show had been told by the building's owner to not let any homeless people in. I wasn't there when that happened but did see the debate, which was actually pretty entertaining. In all fairness, that's a legitimate question because that street changed a lot over the dozen or so years between the Berwick and Non-Factory. Across the street, there was an empty lot blocked off by a chain link fence. Fortunately, some of the changes seemed to be for the better, since there was now an alternative high school and other social service facilities and there's also been the addition of new low-income housing facilities. That hasn't stopped the gang violence only a few blocks away, sadly enough.

A few months ago, there was an investigative report on one of the local TV stations, about how there was an "illegal late night party" in a loft building around the corner from where the Boiler Room was. The reporter, Mike Beaudet, who also teaches journalism at Northeastern, sent in three "undercover" students to conduct an investigation as a class project. They'd found out about the "concert," as one of the reporters described it, online and there was actually an advance ticket sale, with the location being disclosed a few hours beforehand. With techno music thumping in the background and ominous narration, hidden-camera video was taken and it showed a cash bar (with no ID required—oh nooooo!!!"). It showed people using marijuana and cocaine (the *horror*!). The report also said that there had been more than 30 of these underground events in the last two years. I guess the people behind this report don't get out that much. The city inspector talked about "inappropriate use of space that puts people in a dangerous situation." Is he sure he isn't talking about city hall?

This was the same building where three DIY spaces were shut down at the same time in 2013. They'd hosted shows with bands that probably wouldn't have been booked in local clubs and, truth be told, the shows would have been a lot lamer in those venues. There were never any problems, just people getting together to see bands and have a good time. Something the city officials apparently consider to be a serious crime.

After the report about the dance party, the blowback towards Beaudet and his narc students was swift. The students' names were revealed and a rumor was started about how Beaudet drinks his own pee (which, according to someone I know, might actually have been true when he was in college). #MikeBeaudetDrinksPee went viral on Twitter and other social media outlets were bombarded with similar comments.

These intrepid reporters probably would have been completely freaked out by the Boiler Room. The shows there were chaotic. Beer cans and other projectiles would fly, there were fireworks. It did get to be a bit much at times but they also had some incredible bands come through. I could make a long list but, just this year, there were ripping sets from BLOOD PRESSURE, LATEX, SAVAGEHEADS, LA URSS, MORPHEME, S.H.I.T. and WARTHOG. I missed the LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS show a few years ago but that's been their only Boston appearance to date and I'm also kicking myself for missing G.LO.S.S.'s after-show last year. Even SHEER MAG, who I'm not a fan of, played a show there. It drew in people who wouldn't ordinarily go to the Boiler Room and I was told by someone that some people were charged $20 to get in. Turns out he was pulling my leg. I admit it did make me laugh although I suppose SHEER MAG fans should be treated as nicely as everyone else, even if they're into an overrated band. (Spare me the hate mail—I already got enough grief about my comments about them on Facebook!)

The thing about the Boiler Room is, even with the craziness, everyone pretty much got along or seemed to and I don't think I ever saw a fight. I'm writing this as a semi-outsider since I wasn't really part of the core of people who ran the place, although I never felt unwelcome. There were seldom any tough guy antics and the one time I saw someone doing that, he was taken outside and, instead of resolving it violently, was basically scolded and then let back in.

I'm just amazed they kept it going as long as they did. Kevin, one of the people who ran the space, told me that the secret had been keeping shows quiet, relying on word of mouth and flyers and not setting up Facebook event pages. That did mean that you wouldn't always hear about shows if you weren't in the loop and there could also be a sense of cliquishness. Sad to say, that's always been the case in Boston, along with elitist attitudes. OPPOSITON RISING have a song called "Elitist Punks Fuck Off" and such candor has definitely rubbed some people the wrong way—people who probably *do* deserve to be rubbed the wrong way. Some years ago, I remember talking to Aaron from the Rhode Island bands ULCER, PAINDRIVER and STRAIGHT TO HELL and he was lamenting the fact he had difficulty getting shows for his bands in Boston. He said, *"I guess I don't know the secret handshake."* He does have

COLUMNS

a point. Sometimes things seem to operate in a parallel universe. There's another venue called the Wreck Center that's been open for quite awhile but the bands that play there are part of a separate scene, even though there aren't a ton of musical dissimilarities, at least to me. It's all just punk rock, right?

The location probably didn't hurt, either, since it wasn't in a residential neighborhood. It was a brick building in the middle of a truck lot in Allston, a little off the beaten path, and the shows were held in the basement. The cops would show up on occasion but, as far as I know, never invaded the space.

So what led to its demise? I'm not sure if the Channel 5 report had anything to do with it, but the people promoting the shows did circle the wagons a bit more and tried to keep the shows even quieter. Eventually, it got reported by the cops as an underground club and the building can no longer be rented. There have been different rumors about who might have snitched but I'm not going to spread them. The only thing that matters is it's gone. And we're left to speculate whether or not Mike Beaudet does, indeed, drink his own pee.

*****

The review pile continues to mount but space is limited this month so I'll keep this segment short. BILL BONDSMEN have been around for over ten years and *Until The Razor Cuts* is only their second full-length. In fact, it was culled from two recording sessions, one in 2011 and one in 2014. Some of the non-LP selections from the 2011 session already appeared on various 7"s. Another dark and intense collection of electrifying, nightmarish punk. The latter also perfectly describes Tony's cutting, soul-purging vocals, which have just enough distortion on them to enhance the effect. In addition to the straight-ahead fury for the bulk of these songs, there's new territory explored. "Gears" has a sinister aura, adding some spooky-sounding organ to a deliberate, mind-messing excursion. The knife pictured on the cover and the title give you a pretty accurate picture of what's on the vinyl. (Mastermind, mastermindrec.com; billbondsmen.bandcamp.com)

Speaking of longtime bands, it's always a happy day around here when a new HERO DISHONEST record shows up and their latest album is *Liha Ja Teräs* (*Meat and Steel*). It's not the best disc I've heard from them but there's still plenty to offer. Fast, frenetic hardcore that's never fit any pat category and when they stay away from the pure thrash, things get a little more interesting. The likes of "Suomi On Rasistinen Perahikia," "Sepalusten Laskija" and "Donitsit" all have a snaky intensity that show off muscular, edgy chops to go along with the harsh-tongued vocals. Even in a speedier track like "Viulut Vireeseen," the instrumentation is tight and dynamic. Only 100 copies for the first pressing. (Peterwalkee, peterwalkeerecords.com)

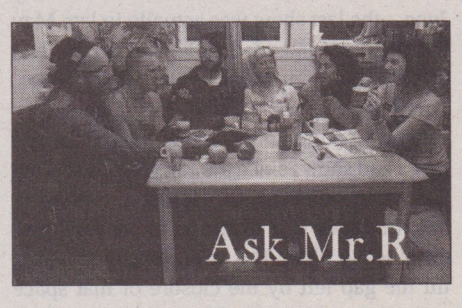
The *October Dreams* demo is the third release from Philly band the BROOD. In case you forgot, this band includes people from WITCH HUNT, LOST CAUSE, ENDLESS NIGHTMARE and many others. Plenty of burn, embracing Swedish hardcore and some UK anarcho-punk (particularly on the title track). And, with age, optimism continues to fade, if it was ever there to begin with. "Dying Futures" sums it up succinctly, beginning with Ned's howl and everyone exulting *"Nothing to hope for, no one to care, nowhere to go, no one is there"* although the message is more that this is the only life and there isn't anything beyond that. Make the most of it, I suppose. This at least provides a cathartic release. (filthybrood.com)

NANDAS has the CRAZY SPIRIT / DAWN OF HUMANS muse down pretty well on their debut, self-titled 7". One song is titled "Dawntown" and perhaps that meant to be tongue-in-cheek. The four quick songs feature buzzy guitar and bass and thumpa-thumpa-thump drums, with barbed-sounding production. One slight change is Anahit's vocals are breathier than on their 2014 demo. Comes with a fold-out poster and small lyric book. More New York punk goodness. (nandas.bandcamp.com)

Austin's OBEDIENCE is the latest band for Dave Ackerman (ex-TEAR IT UP), who teams up with people from BREAKOUT, SEVERED HEAD OF STATE, CRIATURAS and more for a ripping debut demo. Drummer Chris Pfeffer provides a formidable engine to this band's full-tilt sound, throwing in D-beat bash, although OBEDIENCE don't strictly fall into that category. It's just high-speed pillage from start to finish, with Dave barking out the words with as much anger as always. And without naming names, there's plenty of disgust with what's going on in the contemporary political universe and, sadly, some things never change. (obedience.bandcamp.com)

Speaking of Austin bands, VAASKA have a new-ish 7", *Futuro Primitivo*, which was originally pressed for their Japanese tour and has been given a US release on Beach Impediment. Nothing new to report here—Vaaska keep cranking out one solid D-beat hardcore disc after another. Truth be told, I kind of miss the semi-melodic warm guitar tone from the early records since that added a different wrinkle but this is still sturdy, streamlined, floor rattling stuff. They also stand above the pack a bit by merit of Victor Gutierrez's formidable guitar shredding. (Beach Impediment, beachimpedimentrecords.bigcartel.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox.blogspot.com, sonicoverload.net, subvox82@gmail.com. R.I.P. Barker Gee



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion *column though. (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx.'")*

Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357) or send a regular assed email to askmrr@mail.com. If you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!

Do you regret any of your tattoos? Do you regret all of them? Thinking about getting my first tattoo, age 41. Should I wait until I'm 60?

Well, all big decisions bring an opportunity for regret, so when the outcome will have a way slower path to reversal, I know that making them will seem even more daunting. But that doesn't mean that you should go out of your way to *avoid* making them, you know? Like, it's not a *bad idea* to decide to quit your job, uproot, and move away. If you decide you want to move back home after a while, you're gonna have to pack again, find a new place you can live, and explain to your friends why Pittsburgh didn't work out for you, and that can be a real pain in the ass, but it's totally a reversible process. Actually, it can be a really fulfilling decision to just go! Moving cities can be an opportunity to meet new people, start new bands, challenge yourself to do things in a new way, and even to find a fucking breakfast place where you don't have to stand in line for two hours for a fucking omelet. You might be better off for the experience and never want to go home. *Who knows*. Some things

you just gotta try to know.

The drawback of making the tattoo decision is that they can be somewhat painful and pricey to remove and in some instances won't be really completely gone after all your hard work. You just have to decide how much you really care about going through with it, and how well you think they'll fit into your life. Like, what are your main concerns about having a tattoo? Has it been part of your identity to not have them? Are you afraid of the commitment? Wuz up? If you wanna move in baby steps, you could get a small tattoo somewhere easily covered by clothing, and then try that laser removal path if you don't like it at a certain point. Chances are though you'll notice that having a tattoo is not as big a deal as the *anticipation* of having one. Being someone who has waited until they're forty-one or waited until they're sixty is a cool option to have for this particular decision making process because you've got so much more personal input than you would've when you were eighteen. You've avoided all the impulse tattoo cliches so far: tribal bands, yin-yangs, Chinese symbols, et al; they're common enough now that they won't really hinder you from getting a job, *and* they *hardly even* make you look edgy! Use your life experience to decide what design is best for you and what designs are best to avoid. For example, at this point in my life, I know that, personally, getting a tattoo of a band I like is not a good idea because it turns out that I'm musically finicky, and everyone that used to be a hero to me in younger years is pretty generally terrible now, and there is nothing worse than giving someone terrible a platform on your own body. Go get yourself a nice wizard or something instead.

UNSOLICITED ADVICE

After requesting feedback about dealing with the death of my father, and following so many other devastating losses to our community including our dear friend Barker Gee, I thought you might want to know a few things that I have learned/been taught about mourning:

1) Don't forget to eat, cause you probably won't want to, but you definitely still have to.

2) Sleeping really helps. If you have problems sleeping because of an overactive brain, my friend taught me a trick to shut out the thoughts and to finally fall asleep: visualize the number three hundred and count backwards. Visualize each descending number. Make it out of something. Like, three hundred is mowed into grass, two ninety-nine is made out of matches, two ninety-eight is beer poured on concrete. If you lose count just start over. Forever in her debt for that one.

3) Try not to resort to drugs and alcohol any more than you already do. No problems get solved with new problems, and all the shit you're avoiding will still be waiting for you when you sober up.

4) Be with friends / ask for help. It'll be better for you than you think.

5) *Or* don't be with friends. They understand if you need some time to work through some shit alone.

6) If you are like me and need space at precisely the same time that you are unable to be alone with your brain, try going by yourself to the museum on free day, or sitting alone in a movie theater. Wander around in a nature setting (good for crying in public), play music as often as possible, teach yourself how to do something, fix something you've been meaning to fix, make a list of projects and watch yourself complete them one by one by one. Also just give yourself time to not do anything at all, and to not beat yourself up for mourning.

7) Cry a lot. It's really okay, don't worry about it.

8) Take as long as you need. There aren't any deadlines for this kind of stuff. You don't have to get over anything now or ever. Check in with yourself and do what feels right.

Remember, take care of yourselves and each other. Send a text to 510-585-HELP. Send in email form to askmrr@mail.com.

When punk was first forming in 1976 it was not a given that it would challenge the traditional gender roles in music. There was not much in the early days of the Ramones, Clash, Pistols or Damned that would suggest much more. But waiting in the wings as punk took shape were a host of very talented and creative people who were sidelined in the traditional music business. The first few punk bands cracked open the myth of professionalism and told the crowd to "try and do better and start their own band" inspiring a generation of people who otherwise might have never picked up an instrument. Rushing into the space opened up in the first wave of punk were many women who formed bands that did not conform to the traditional roles of women in the music business as cutesy girl groups or pop starlets. While Debbie Harry and Jennifer Miro didn't stray far from the traditional role of chanteuse, Poly Styrene and others set out to completely deconstruct it. This month I would like to talk about two recent memoirs by participants in the first wave of punk: *Violence Girl* by Alice Bag and *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes, Music, Music, Music, Boys, Boys, Boys* by Viv Albertine.

I think the Bags' *Survive* 7" on Dangerhouse is one of the great triumphs of first wave American punk. It is a record I never get tired of listening to over and over. Just two songs but with such a raw purity it sends shivers down my spine to this day. I have written about this record in this column many times before. The Slits on the other hand are a band I can just not get into. Their quirky off-kilter discordant punky reggae has just never clicked with me. I understand that they were slyly deconstructing rock music, but it just goes over my head. Not to take anything away from their punk *attitude* though.

Both of these books share some similarities. Viv and Alice both grew up poor in somewhat troubled homes. They both discovered music at a young age as an escape and immersed themselves in the world of records, bands, and music fandom. Both were just the right age at the right time and place as the punk scene got moving and eagerly became important players in their local scenes as they took off.

It took me a while to get in to the groove with Alice Bag's memoir. There is a lot of build-up talking about her childhood in East LA. While it's important to the story, it does kind of drag. Alice became totally fascinated with music and really into the glitter and glam scenes that preceded punk in LA. She was an obsessive fan of Elton John and also into David Bowie, Kiss, and other flamboyant glittery bands of the time. She struggled to get an all-girl band together but was never able to make something gel. Then when punk started to take off in 1976 all of the misfits outsiders and miscreants who had been lurking in the subculture shadows suddenly coalesced and she formed the Bags. They initially performed with paper bags over their heads, and there are some great stories of the early gigs.

Alice talks about the Masque, the Canterbury, and other personalities and bands that will be familiar to those who have read *We've Got the Neutron Bomb* or *Lexicon Devil*. However, she has a different perspective being a Chicana woman coming of age in this exciting time. She digs deep

into the rage and anger that drives her on stage. She discusses the Bags' career, the rise of hardcore and her later bands such as Castration Squad. In the midst of it all she goes to volunteer in war-torn Nicaragua before returning to LA and becoming a teacher. Alice Bag has in fact returned to music, and just released a solo album. There are a few tracks, like "Poisoned Seed," that echo her punk roots, but mostly the music wasn't too compelling for me. However, I found her lyrics to be insightful, dealing with domestic abuse, education, sexual assault, and failed relationships. Here was a young teenage rebel now a wise woman discussing topics that those who have read her book will find very close to her. I found some of this refreshing because I feel like a lot of punk lyrics today are just like another instrument—they are there to fit the music but there is not a lot of substance within. Check out her website too! She has some cool stuff on there about women in the early LA scene.

Viv Albertine also became fascinated with music at a young age. Like many of her contemporaries she attended art school but was kicked out and found herself working at a bar with few prospects. She managed to get into a different art school where she met, and then dated a pre-Clash Mick Jones. Her stories about the first few years of punk in Britain are great. She surrounded herself with other people who were involved in music, but never thought that she would actually be playing an instrument. Then punk started and she jumped at the chance to embrace the freedom and all of the possibilities that opened up overnight. She formed a band with a young Sid Vicious, then joined the Slits who toured with the Clash. All the while the Slits managed to create great hostility from the establishment, and even the punk scene simply for being "girls in a band."

Don't let the title of the book for you—she is not as shallow as it might lead you to believe. Her mother used to taunt her when she got home from school that all she cared about was clothes, clothes, clothes, music, music, music, and boys, boys, boys. Certainly there is a lot of that in this book and it is quite entertaining. However, as it says on the back of the dustcover, she's a searingly honest writer. While she provides great color and commentary to the early days of punk, she actually doesn't spend a ton of time dealing with the Slits career. I expected a blow-by-blow account of tours and recording sessions only to find her leaving the Slits halfway through the book. The second half of the book deals with her life after the Slits and in many ways it is even more honest and revealing. Viv manages to reinvent herself by teaching aerobics, then going to film school and becoming a director, then meeting a man and becoming determined to get pregnant. There are gut-wrenching scenes of her desperately trying different fertility treatments finally succeeding and having a daughter only to find she has cancer. She manages to struggle and beat cancer only to find herself trapped in a loveless marriage, depressed and miserable. This finds Viv in her fifties rebelling against society a second time and rejecting the role of a suburban housewife to pick up the guitar again and start playing music. Like Alice, Viv has a new album out and again I am not crazy about the music. Although I think fans of the Slits might like some of her guitar playing. Her songs are brutally honest and deal with a lot of the themes she explores in her book. Again this is the voice of a young rebel who has not let society grind her down, now in her fifties striking out against again at what is expected of a woman in her position.

With Humble Dedication

As of this writing, I have officially been living in Seattle one week. What's really amazing about this place is that all of the trees are huge and leafy and made of undead and ever living gods and that the human residents think muggy warm air and a pearly grey sky with cheeky edges of sun screams summer—and are showing the world their happy trails and shot gunning weed all over the place. I'm already experiencing that thing I used to experience as a late teens aged crust punk, where dyed hair and piercings and patches and surliness make you dart your eyes over to someone or someone's on the street or at a cafe. Hilarious. To be in a place where punk is still noticed and taken seriously is very odd, perhaps it feels very white to me, in a way I outgrew when I remembered my body and left the few white towns I grew up and went to college in, but now here I am, again in a largely white city, but it is ignorant to only call it that. The brown people, the Duwamish activists, the Black installation artists, the Hapa business owners, the Latino community health workers, they are all here too, kicking ass. But again, I've been here a week, despite my frequent visits over the past two and a half years, I just feel like, I don't know shit yet, and that's okay.

Leah and I were definitely the punks getting eyes, sometimes from other punks, sometimes just from reading and writing brown or gay people at Victrola coffee, but we are also the loudest people in the room, eating whole fried shrimp we got from Foulee's. Which is the best. Here in this city with some of my favorite writers and cultural workers either by my side or nearby, even in the next town, I feel like I could move the way I want to, write and not write and spend time the way I want to. But it's just a feeling. A sense. Underneath the grey and the leaves I feel deeply and shakingly, so much, a sweetness, sure, a kind of delight, and also a not completely uncomfortable and slightly epic sorrow. Is sorrow the right word? Overwhelm? It's like rising on a wave, but feeling so incredulous to be riding it that I feel imminently about to nosedive, swallow water, drown. When using everything I had to stay afloat in green water at the Jersey Shore as a fourteen-year-old with arthrogryposis and scoliosis and fresh out of full body braces and casts, my best friend, or rather whichever demon muse I was in love with at the time, who was pretty much mean to me every other day, said, "Oh-ho-ho, you just got pwned by that wave! That wave *owns* you!" It was not what you might call motivation, straight up, but shame does wonders. And here I am.

I am living with my fucking partner, Tony. And my becoming-family friend, Kate. I am in love with this set up. Previously, in Oakland, I was also in love with the set up, in a different way. I was living with my best friends: my bosom friend/BFF/Life partner Véro, and my old friend/becoming family person Caitlin, who is Véro's partner, and that was challenging in its own way, and beautiful, but it didn't feel like sudden death of humiliation and a reminder that I don't know how to adult. Maybe it's that we were all coming out of similar punk houses and shared knowledges and vocabularies, and we could accept each other's expressions and mood swings with more salt. We learned to talk to each other profusely and profoundly. And maybe too there was such a practice around creating alone time that what was lacking at moments was believing that we could reach out for a hug or a hand when we were sad and taking time in our rooms. But we even learned how to do that often, too. With all that we built, and worked through, together, this gorgeous mountain, I can hardly imagine the climb, but I also recall that parts

really sucked for each of us. Growing through and with and beyond trauma is painful. Finding what practices make you feel whole, or at least entertained for part of your day is crucial. I never underestimate how much work we did, so maybe I feel alive and sort of struck in the heart, zombiefied with the knowledge that new work is ahead. I already feel shook with all this potential. And we do ask for hugs when we need them.

My queer family from Oakland fucking moved with me to Seattle, fucking let themselves be vulnerable enough to ask for help with the moving process and we all watched our lives be picked up by other people's calloused and clean and capable hands. I feel pretty confident saying that it wasn't easy for anyone, but they all acted like rock stars about it. My boo was there, our close friend and roommate, my boo's best friend, various Oakland loves, my freaking beloved, whimsical, infuriating mother. Our relationship is fraught. But close. Sometimes I wonder what else we could break the ice with, other than fighting. The distance of a country challenges our closeness, but hurt in our history does too. Even when we think we are agreeing there is slight confusion and mistrust there. And I feel confused, usually, about whether or not she is right about everything. My mother is sweet, hilarious, contradictory, preaches humility, because she is in fact shy and wondrous, but also headstrong. A part of her believes that there is a set right and wrong, I think, and more specifically, a kind of true success or failure. And the part of me that rails against those values, whether she names them or not, whether she even directly identifies with them or not, might be the same part of me that is afraid that there is a right and a wrong, and that I am pretty off kilter, if not the fucking wrongest ever always. But that's what accepting yourself as a punk is all about right? Being okay with being a mess and responding to the mess in the world and making messy art with it. Or something.

But so I'm 26 and I'm still wondering if my mom needs to tell me that my wild and weaving together life choices are okay in order for me to deep down believe it as much as most of me does. I'm sorry, you guys this is lame, but just know, as I crawl through this life transition, this column is definitely going to live up to its title, and not just in the calling out ableism way, also just in the whiny sappy, self absorbed way. My mom said, in the naming the facts typa way that she has, with her bright and beautiful eyes, that she feels like she needs to commit to doing something with humble dedication, and she believes that I need to do that too. I am choosing to say this in the most positive version of what she actually said. Because maybe, her misfire is not in intent, but in wording things with a positive spin. I'm a posi punk man, but posi punks are sometimes easily knocked down, we're lightweight and we're not angels. So I'm doing it for her because I believe in her and in myself. And the humble dedication that I would like to celebrate at this moment, is the film I just directed and successfully raised over our asking on. I would like to celebrate *DIATHESIS*, and the Bay Area energy that helped us make it real. I would like to celebrate my lover, my love, and all of the potential Seattle energy that will make my weird dreams here real. I would like to celebrate all of the things I am currently writing and working on, I would like to celebrate my relationships which I am dedicated to and ever growing, and I would like to celebrate myself, the project I have been most humbly dedicated to, and which I am humbly learning about now, in this large green place I know little and feel much about. My mom is working on landscape painting, I'll let you know how it goes, she's got a lot of talent.

Shout-out to all you romantic and lame and crazy and posi surviving punks out there.

OBITUARY

BARKER GEE
1983–2016

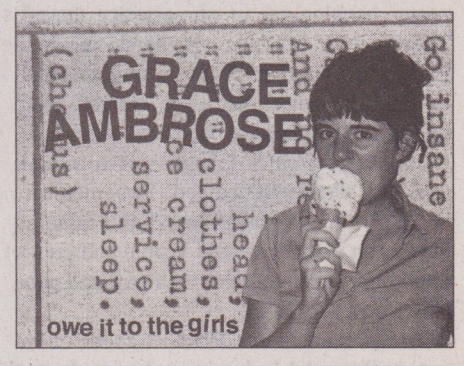
Barker Gee was a talented musician, a handsome handyman, a sharp-witted troublemaker, and a sweet and hilarious friend. You could always rely on him having a jar of whisky at hand, a busted-ass van full of junk, and a ridiculous scheme brewing. He was more charming than a person has a right to be and had his own way of speaking that was a cross between southern colloquialism, hustler sweet talk and straight-up jibber jabber. This proved to be an irresistible combination that assured that he'd always have a co-pilot during his various sketchy missions. Whether these missions were successful or not was almost beside the point. It was always going to be a crazy adventure and 100 times more fun that acting right.

Usually those that have the most to give—especially the handsome and the socially agile—wind up being the least generous with themselves but Barker was the opposite. All of the crappy jobs and cockamamie projects that you'd have a hard time convincing your spouse / best friend / man you saved in combat to help you out with, Barker would be there to readily lend a hand. There wasn't much happening in Oakland during the time that he lived here that he didn't help make happen. He fixed amps and tour vans, he hung art shows, he ran sound, he filled in for band members who showed up too drunk to play, was constantly hauling equipment / garbage / bodies, he saved punk houses from eviction, repaired photo booths, you name it.

He started playing in bands in his hometown (IDC and Pizzasaurus Rex) in Arkansas before moving to Boston in his early twenties, where he attended the Berklee College of Music and played in punk bands like Jean Claude Jam Band, Witches With Dicks, Ringers, and the Young Men. When he moved to Oakland in 2011, he played in Huff Stuff Magazine, Neon Piss, and Wet Spots.

Barker Gee committed suicide at his family's house in Conway, Arkansas on July 21st, 2016 at the age of 32. It's hard to accept that someone so full of life is no longer here. He was a hilarious character, a prodigious musician, and a deeply beloved friend. We're lucky to have inherited the music that he left behind and enough hilarious stories to last forever but we've also been left with a terrible loss that can't be fixed.

—Janelle Hessig



Issue 400! What the fuck! It's hard to belive that this media experiment has sustained itself for almost thirty-five years in print (well past the "experiment" phase, I guess). This issue marks my two year anniversary at MRR—twenty-four issues at the helm.

Despite my deep-seated control freak tendencies and desire to do-it-myself, this magazine could never come together without the work of dozens of other punks—reviewers, green tapers, proofreaders, envelope stuffers,

columnists, you name it. This issue is dedicated to all of the shitworkers past and present who make the magazine possible (a list that numbers in the many thousands by now!). Everyone interviewed or featured has some kind of connection to the *MRR* day-to-day. Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com to get in on the action yourself.

New Bands, Same Old Shit

So Turbo and his gang took umbrage at my insistence that he remove T.H.U.G from his column last month. You can read about it in his column earlier in these pages.

It somehow seems fitting that in the *400th* issue of this fanzine we're retreading the same conversations ad nauseum. *MRR* has never been a place where white power bands have been welcome. You know that green tape we have? The Skrewdriver records here have it on all four sides—taped shut. In the pre-Internet days we used to review white power bands, to make people aware of their political inclinations, but we left the contact information out. This magazine's resistance to the slow and continuous creep of fascism into rock'n'roll is well-documented.

Am I demanding that we investigate the political backgrounds of each and every band member of each and every band in the magazine? Of course not. When it comes to a notoriously sketchy genre though, I scrutinize the groups more closely.

T.H.U.G features members of a band called White Lightning. White Lightning wasn't the kind of naughty Oi! band that just flirts with right-wing tendencies and the aesthetics of fascism. (Hey Turbo, we have a Last Resort poster hanging up in our practice space!) They were a full-on racist band, neo-Nazi to the core—in their lyrics, in their conduct, in the interviews that they granted, both during their time as a band and afterwards. It only takes a quick Google search to have this fact vividly illustrated. The members of T.H.U.G who played in White Lightning have been granted several visible and public opportunities to renounce their past and none have chosen to do so.

To me, the fact that T.H.U.G doesn't have outwardly racist lyrics is irrelevant. It is a band made up of at least a few outwardly and violently racist people, a band that still performs songs by their Neo-Nazi predecessors, with members who look back fondly on the time they beat up a group of Maoris. Why should I knowingly give them attention in these pages? Particularly attention that makes no mention of this past?

There's a difference between censorship and an editorial vision. I don't consider this to be sweeping something under the rug. Bands like T.H.U.G are not invited to be a part of the conversations that this magazine hopes to cultivate. To anyone who just wants to write about music while ignoring history, context, and the current state of the world we are in, a world where black folks and people of color are dying every day, where black folks and people of color are disproportionately searched, stopped, arrested, and incarcerated, I say, "Start your own fucking magazine."

If you run a publication, you need to be responsible and accountable for the content in it. *MRR*-emulator *No Friends* published a column in their third issue that basically amounted to "Not all cops!" (It was by John Caution, singer of notably terrible band Weekend Nachos. My favorite sentence was "Maybe, just maybe, that police officer wants to be a good cop.") It was a poorly reasoned, terribly argued, myopic piece of writing that ignored the inseparable histories of white supremacy and policing in this country. As my friend Ari said, "Unless you are among the populations of people who are disproprotionately incarcerated and murdered at the hands of the prison industrial complex, you have no business talking shit about how people navigate the dismantling of those systems and people. Fuck out of here with your white noise."

There are nuanced critiques to be made about how police recruiting programs target black and poor neighborhoods, how they frame the options as a career in the force or the statistical likelihood of a life behind bars, about how there are reasons why, under the crush of our deeply, deeply fucked capitalist society, someone might choose to become a cop, about the false promise of policing, about how recurits then become agents in the subjugation of their former communities. "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." The column ignored all of that.

I've heard from a few people that my criticism of this column ("[*MRR* and *No Friends*] may look identical but only one of them would publish a cop apologist column!") is being framed by one of the editors of *No Friends* as a personal attack. I suppose it's personal insofar as he is a person who runs a magazine. I'd say it has more to do with what I view as the responsibility inherent in being the editor of a widely distributed publication. You have the opportunity to direct discourse, to spread good ideas and refute damaging, fucked up ones. If that's not why you make a magazine, then what is motivating you? If I print something in these pages, it comes with my implicit endorsement, unless I explicitly say otherwise in the form of an editor's note, a rebuttal, etc. It is startling—and revealing—that a publication based out of Chicago, home of one of the most corrupt police departments in a wholly corrupt profession, would print this piece of writing.

It's also our responsibility—as readers, punks, humans—to point out bullshit when we see it. That goes for this magazine too. Write to us when we fuck up. We won't take it personally.

Why am I writing about this now, in this context? I suppose to remind you of one of the enduring differences between *MRR* and so many of the other wannabe punk papers of record in this world. We try our best to amplify the shit that matters, not add to the bullshit of the status quo, even if it means making some enemies. Do I think the editors of *No Friends* are racist cop lovers? No. Do I think they need to think much longer and harder about what they put out into the world and how they do it? Absolutely, especially if they are going to continue to operate on an international scale. Turbo suggested that I point out dodgy bands he writes about in my own column. When it comes to stuff like this, I don't believe in printing "both sides" just for the sake of it. We're supposed to provide an alternative to the apathetic real world and I take that remit seriously. So, sorry Turbo, I'm gonna keep cutting out the bands you write about that have members with well-documented Nazi links. Them's the breaks. Your column is still my favorite, though.

You've Got A New Look, Baby

If you're observant you may have noticed that this magazine has gotten a design overhaul. It hopefully looks a little less mid-2000s and a little bit more right now. Earlier today I texted former coord Golnar and asked her if I was a square because I was excited about putting in page numbers and a table of contents. Her response? "No, you're a hero."

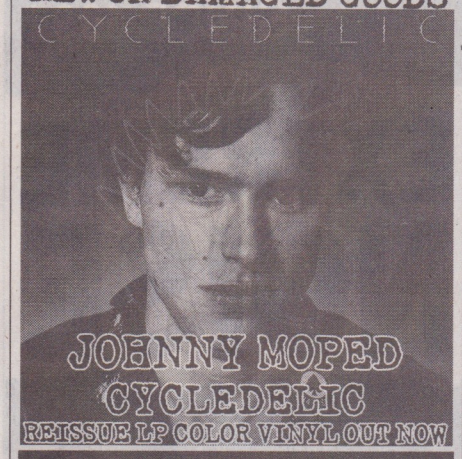
Our Mag Could Be Your Life

We just hired an awesome new distro coordinator! Arielle is gonna move out here from D.C. in September. Can't wait.

Two weeks ago, Brendan had to leave the magazine suddenly in order to deal with some personal stuff. We're looking for someone to fill his shoes. Want to move to San Francisco and listen to torpedo bonzers while eating your cereal and checking your email? Get in touch.

Moving here was the best decision I ever made. The archive means we're constantly discovering new mindblowing jams (The Orchids – "If Boys Got Pregnant," youtube it right now! Thanks, Graham!) and we've got other exciting developments on the horizon. It's a great time to be here. Insurrectionary punk geniuses enquire within.

NEW ON DAMAGED GOODS



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There is little better than seeing a band whose hometown audience is absolutely in thrall to them. Efialtis was the first group that I saw play at the newly christened DIY Space for London, in a room packed with people who shouted all the words (in a language almost none of them spoke or understood!) and punched the air in all the right moments (iconic documentation of this phenomenon later in these pages!). They felt like the DSFL house band and to me they represent many of the same liberatory possibilities as that unassuming warehouse—liberation from the city, liberation from the "right way to play," liberation from genre, liberation from hardcore hegemony. A Cypriot / Greek / Welsh maelstrom, three of the most uncompromising and generous women I know, their songs are steamrollers, perfect soundtracks to a world that seems to be perpetually shrouded in darkness. Geographic shifts dictate that the band will be wrapping up activity—for now—but thankfully we've been left with two 7"s (available from Static Shock and La Vida Es Un Mus) so that they might live on in our collective imagination. Οι γυναίκες είναι η μεγαλύτερη.

Introduction by Grace Ambrose. Interview by Lydia Athanasopoulos. Photos by Simon Marsham, Joe Oremus, Jack Pitt, and Judas Rapite. Illustrations by Bryony Beynon.

MRR: What are the connecting fabrics of your band? Do you have any shared passions and goals as members of it?

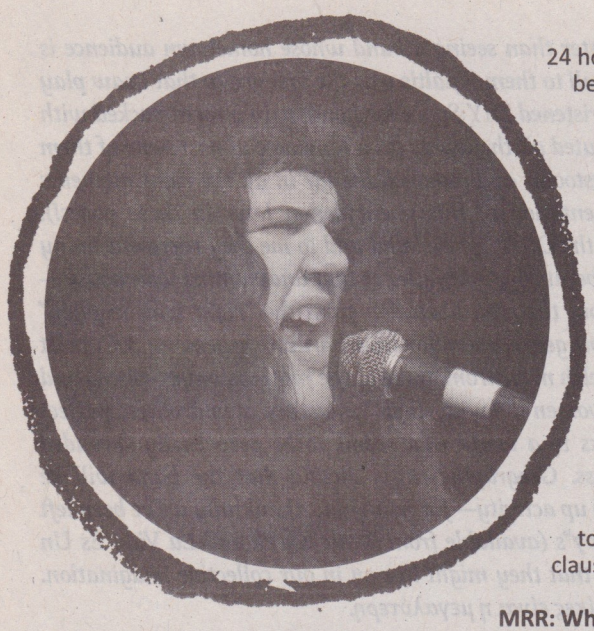
Alex: Efialtis was born on a hot Friday in June 2014, when I quit my shitty job and came back home and chatted to Bryony about how I was so mad. She suggested I put all my feelings of anger to good use, so we had a practice at a spot that, it was later revealed, was on top of an unexploded World War II bomb. Bryony, Eva and I (and Grace for two of those very first times) practiced there a bunch and, depending on whom you ask, it didn't explode. My main goal has been to make raw, primitive, mystical music with people I love.

Bryony: It was a very exciting offer for me to play with women who hadn't done active bands before, because while I have done some bands in my life, I am by no means an expert. In any case I am interested in unlearning methods of communication, songwriting and generally playing that I have largely absorbed through a world where the terms are often set by men, indeed English speaking men. I didn't know too much about Greek culture before starting a band with Alex and Eva, and feel blessed to have learnt a little more as a result; still working on that alphabet, though.

Eva: Alex put a post on Facebook saying "Someone play bass in my Greek band," so I replied, "Lend me a bass, lol." But, Alex lent me her bass and my hand was forced, despite never being in a band, and not having touched a guitar for ten years. I panicked and went out to borrow a *Dummy's Guide to Bass Guitar* before realizing I could learn more from watching bass players I like and just enjoy being in a supportive band. So to answer your question better: for me, it's about learning something new with friends and exploring Greek identity.

MRR: You are have just released your first EP on Static Shock Records, and another will be out by the time this goes to print. Tell us more!

Alex: Yes, we have two EPs out now actually! The first is a self-titled, four-song single out on Static Shock Records, and then we have *Κολοσσιαίο Γυναικείο Κεφάλι* (*Kolossiaio Ginaikeio Kefali*, which means "Colossal Female Head"), a three-song single out on La Vida Es Un Mus. Thematically, the self titled record is more about hatred and enemies, whether *KGK* is more about disease, religion and believing. The song on Side A is about me becoming a British pop star called Cheryl Cole who went on a charity thing in Mount Kilimanjaro and got malaria and got given



24 hours to live—but somehow survived). Getting to work with Tom and Paco has been awesome for me, as both labels have influenced me in different ways—and I'm so happy with how both records have turned out.

MRR: On your first track, I think I hear some of that same world-falling-apart riffage that Naytia have, and do I hear an Adiexodo influence in the noisy aesthetic? What genres or punk periods or scenes in general, and what Greek bands in specific, have influenced your sound?

Alex: I don't think we really had a clear influence to our sound at any point. I guess it became more what we listened to at the time, at least that's what it was like for me. At the time, I couldn't stop listening to *Observant Com El Món Es Destrueix* by Una Bèstia Incontrolable, *Siglo XXI* by Belgrado and *Only Theatre of Pain* by Christian Death, so I would say that these records have aesthetically, and sometimes thematically, influenced the first wave of Efialtis songs. Adiexodo has a song called "Efialtis" as well, so I wish I had a fun story about how I was listening to that and then a coconut fell on my head and decided to use it for our name, but there was not a whole lot of depth to it. Listening to Adiexodo and bands like Ex Humans makes me feel so bleak and claustrophobic, so that probably inspired me more indirectly.

MRR: What made you want to sing in Greek?

Alex: I felt like when trying to capture the dark themes I wanted to explore in the lyrics, you couldn't really feel their weight in English. Maybe it's because I've associated some of these words with cringey nerds in Rob Zombie t-shirts, which was unfortunately not the intended vibe. Switching to Greek made it a lot easier for me to express myself, and it meant I didn't have to conform to rhyming conventions etc. I also found the fact that not everybody could understand me very alluring, as it made me concentrate on performing and the sounds I was making, which I hadn't really thought about before. I also remember this one time I googled "Greek punk music women" and the results were a match for the first three words, and there was a little note in grey underneath saying "missing: women" and "women" was crossed out. This really made me feel nauseous and frustrated and I had to do something about it.

Eva: I think it totally makes sense. Alex writes the lyrics, but I've thought about writing songs in Greek—it's part of our identity, and one of the reasons why we became friends. The language is a really useful tool, being able to communicate with Alex in Greek, whether there's a μαλάκα (*maláka*, wanker) at a gig, or whether we have αγωνία (*agonía*, angst). Why not sing in Greek?

MRR: Do you follow what happens back in Greece? Does it affect or influence your music or lyrics in any way?

Alex: It's really hard for me to miss it, as my family currently lives there and they're at the bottom of the food chain, so to speak. It's become pretty hard hearing all these radical opinions about what Greek people should or shouldn't do, when your dad hasn't really been able to work for weeks. I don't reference politics directly in any of our songs, but they are all conversations between me and an entity that has somehow wronged me. For example in "Oneiropagida," I warn my nemesis that not even a dreamcatcher will stop me from crawling into their dreams; in "Telepathitiko," I try to break free from a man's mind-controlling forces. Those bleak themes of feeling uncertain, stagnant and trapped that I get with every news story about the Greek recession, or pretty much every phone call back home, have channelled their way through our songs and it's become a way for me to express my anger.

Bryony: There was a gig we played last year on the day the Greek people voted whether or not to accept the terms of the EU bailout, and Alex spoke about how this was affecting her family very much from the heart during our set. It felt like a really confronting experience, shedding a more personal light on a situation that was all too distant for many people in the UK. This made me feel very proud to be in a band where these discourses were being brought into punk. It has been really interesting personally to read more widely and understand how EU power brokers like the UK and Germany actually very much economically rely on the political, social, and above all economic subjugation of countries like Spain and Greece, a weight which is felt most brutally, of course, by working class people, which in turn undoes a lot of the myths we are fed about the so-called "European project," the shit about all being "in it" together and so on. What pisses me off the most is how our media like to present austerity as being a simple case of a country

somehow failing to balance a household budget, which, even as someone who knows almost nothing about economics, I can identify as errant bullshit, before you even get to the way that so many European nations have experienced brutal wars, colonization and occupation within their people's living memories, that they live with this trauma and are still being punished today. I am Welsh not English, but it is still very much a wake-up call for me as a person whose worldview has of course been subtly informed by the British colonial mindset since I was a kid. So noticing how both subtle and overt xenophobic tropes are weaponized right across the continent in many directions on both "sides" as a reaction to said economic crises is deeply depressing too.

MRR: Talk to us a bit about the recording and production process you went through with the demo and if or how it was different to that of the EP.

Bryony: We share the rent on a railway arch in Peckham used by a motorbike mechanic and a welder where the demo was recorded. Very metal. The demo was recorded live minus vocals with four mics, I mixed it using a cracked version of Logic and a lot of presets. Trying to demystify every element of the punk process over here, because I've noted in my time of making bands how often the recording process involves a jarring deferral of expertise to men so I've been learning how to record bands myself for a year or so. Then in January we booked in with John Hannon at No Studios in Essex. He's recorded everyone from Eddie and the Hot Rods to Wilko Johnson to the Lowest Form, and the whole process was an absolute dream. The studio is a little outbuilding on a farm and John had that knack of explaining what he was doing, so I felt like I learnt so much about how to record. We also ate at English Roast Dinner all-you-can-eat buffet.

Alex: The two recording experiences were both awesome but so different for me. The demo felt a lot more hands-on, which is something the three of us really like, but during the recording of the 7" I felt a lot more focused on the songs and their meaning. I personally don't really care about the quality, or lack thereof, of the music I listen to, so it's not like we purposely went for a "cleaner" sound than what we had on the demo—it was just two different set-ups.

MRR: In your lyrics you speak of collecting skulls as lucky charms, lighting candles in churches, Christian icons of worship, and you also feature a dead-looking saint on your tape cover and moons and eyes on your first EP. Where does this choice of imagery and theme come from?

Alex: The image we used on the tape cover comes from a book called Heavenly Bodies (written by a Greek guy), which is about jewelled skeletons and how they are worshiped as the remains of saints. In the seventeenth century, some nuns took hundreds of skeletons out of the Roman catacombs, dressed them in silk, gold lace and diamonds and mistakenly identified them as the first Christian martyrs. For ages, Christian people were travelling all around the world to see these skeletons, none of which were ever really identified, but most of them were destroyed during the Enlightenment when it started becoming apparent that these bones probably belonged to peasants. The photos in this book were taken between 2012 and 2015, as some of these skeletons still exist, in their rubies and emeralds. I love this idea of the glamorous cadaver, of completely unknown identity, becoming such a meaningful figure in people's lives and prayers. Catacomb saints: the original trolls.

MRR: Do the song "Dream Catcher" and your name (Nightmare) have a connection?

Alex: All of our songs have some relation to dreams, night terrors, uncanny feelings. Looking for a word to describe all of these insidious themes and ideas we had lead us to Efialtis. Plus I hang a dream catcher with a pentagram in it from my guitar when we play live.

MRR: What is your view on death?

Alex: I think death is something that has inspired many people to write music and explore spiritual paths, but I came from a perspective of fear with our lyrics.

Bryony: Very excited about it.

Eva: Shit happens. But seriously, there's a dichotomy between being okay with death and being grateful for life that makes the majority of my friends try to cram as much in as possible, like these two having four bands on the go.

MRR: As someone who has moved away from their home country, do you still feel the need to identify with that community in some way or form?

Alex: I literally could not wait to get out of Greece in 2008 when I moved to London, but every year here makes me feel increasingly nostalgic, and much more interested in the culture and history. I have a deep, sincere hatred, though, for most Greek tourists who come to London (you're an exception, Lydia!) and I try so hard to understand why they talk trash on everything and everyone in Greek, expecting that no one around them can understand them—it's 2016 and half of Greece is in the UK!

Eva: I remember going to uni, and chatting to someone who was Greek-Cypriot, and it turns out that my brothers used to play football with him in a village in Cyprus that had like fifteen teenagers. He used to take his washing back to

his girlfriend's flat 200 miles away for her to do at the weekend. You can't escape, whether that's a good or bad thing.

MRR: You have also been involved in the opening of DSFL. Tell us more about this project and why you wanted to get involved.
Bryony: DSFL was a dream I had for a very long time, and seeing it having come true gives me life and continuous shivers everyday, even when someone has blocked the toilets or broken the heating for the millionth time. It stands for DIY Space for London, which was sort of the name we gave to the fundraising initiative we started back in 2012 to get a space to have shows, and generally nurture DIY culture, and the resultant building, a converted warehouse in Southeast London close to where Alex and I live, has ended up with the same name. DSFL is pretty much how I met Eva, so it was worth it just for that! We try and be as inclusive as possible, there are like ten or more collectives running different aspects of it, Eva and myself are involved in the Events, Sound, Community and Accountability collectives, Alex does some service with a smile on the bar. What's been especially cool is how activist groups have started to engage with the space, and it feels like punk is being reinvigorated by this alliance, something I personally fetishised as a thing of the past for a long time through my love for old Crass Records bands, and now instead can see it as a very current connection again, which is so great. Everyone who is visiting London should come say hi.
Eva: Again, getting involved in DSFL was one of the most positive, affirming experiences—something I try to remember when I'm cleaning toilets. People came together with a dissatisfaction of how punk gigs were going in London, and four years later built something that's bigger than punk, it's great. We've got a really wide variety of gigs and events at the moment—and the Space is being used by a variety of groups that I didn't even know existed in London. But there's still so much more we have to do, it's a tiring but rewarding experience. Bit upset that Bryony forgot to mention that we're trained bouncers...

MRR: What kind of attitude do you have towards recording and what towards playing live shows? (The first being a process you can control and rework on your own, the latter involving real time exchange and exposure.) Which do you enjoy more and why?
Bryony: Recording can either feel like slow form of torture that makes you hate your songs, or the kind of galvanizing experience that leaves you feeling like a magician. Live shows are still kind of mediated by someone else ("Can I get more malaka in the monitor?") and the crusade against 'splainy soundjerks is real, but there is nothing cooler than people dancing to a song you have made!
Eva: Those darn 'splainy jerks! Obviously, the approach for recording / playing live is different—but nothing beats "reading a room" or whatever, playing off energy and wanting to do well. Playing is so cathartic, you can have a shit week but it's OK because you can get all that energy out in a productive way. But the recording process, or rather the post-recording process, where you scrutinize every aspect of how you play can be draining, trying to make this either perfect, or sound like "x" or "y" that's right for you. Ultimately, I'm really happy to have the recordings and records, but I guess playing with sweet bands wins it...!
Alex: We have played a lot of shows since we started, but I can't really remember more than a couple. I remember the line-up and maybe things that happened during and after our set, just not really what I was doing. Watching us on Ben's *Nozin Aroun'* video zine was pretty funny for me, as I never really thought about what I do/look like when playing. So if I'm going down the memory thing, perhaps I prefer recording, as it has been so memorable and interesting for me and I guess it made me feel like it's okay to pay attention to my ideas.

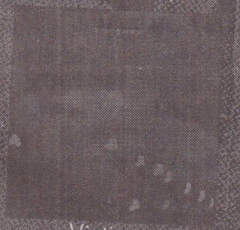
MRR: What are some current local UK or even Greek bands or projects that excite or inspire you in some way?
Alex: I think seeing people I know play in bands in general has made me really empowered and excited for music. Good Throb has probably been the band that's inspired me the most in starting a band and being an overall evil hag. The Lowest Form excites me. Snob, Dregs, No Form, and Artefact from Wales excite me. I haven't been to a show in Greece in over seven years, so I don't feel very attached to the current community there! Will get back to you on that one after a night on the town with Takis Zontiros.
Bryony: Evil hags and glam cadavers forever. I am still excited by the massive upsurge in bands led by women in London, mostly because when I started playing in bands I would very, very rarely play with others like me and so I felt like a sad fat girl alien, which I am, but would like to meet others, you know?! I am still, in 2016, hearing pathetic gatekeeping over what constitutes "hardcore" which is a bummer. Efialtis is a hardcore band, and successfully lobbying for the introduction of ever more palm muted "e"-chugs to our songs has been a great joy. Sick new London bands to check out include Score, Sarcasm and Scrap Brain.
Eva: Molar, Cianuro, As Ondas are all relatively new from London. Outside of London, new bands that I'm listening to a lot are Crumbs, Nachthexen. Not so new, but killing it live every time: Sauna Youth, Frau, Cowtown, Shopping and Ravioli Me Away. Bit of variety for you, there.

efialtis.bandcamp.com

New Album
Dungeon Bastards
July 27 on LP/CD

Deny the Cross
"Alpha Ghoul" LP

Necrot
"The Labyrinth" LP/CD



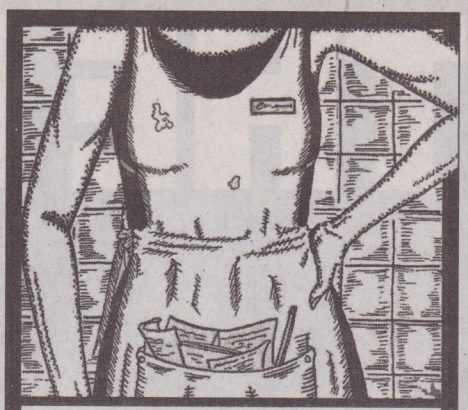
Victims
"Sirens" LP/CD

Double Cross
Demo CS

Spazz "Sweatin To The Oldies" CD

Spazz "Sweatin' 3 Skatin' Satan & Katon" CD

TANKCRIMES



OUT NOW–

DAKHMA– RAZE LP
HARSH WORDS– PLAGUE DAYS 7"
I'M AN INTESTINE– OUT OF REACH 7"
AUTARCH– THE DEATH OF ACTIACUS LP
LYSP– DEMO CS

OUT SOON–

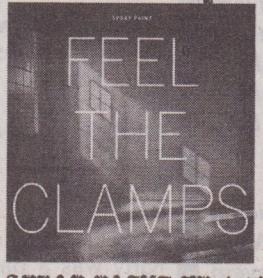
UNINHABITABLE– S/T LP
CREVASSE– S/T LP

ALL WE KNOW

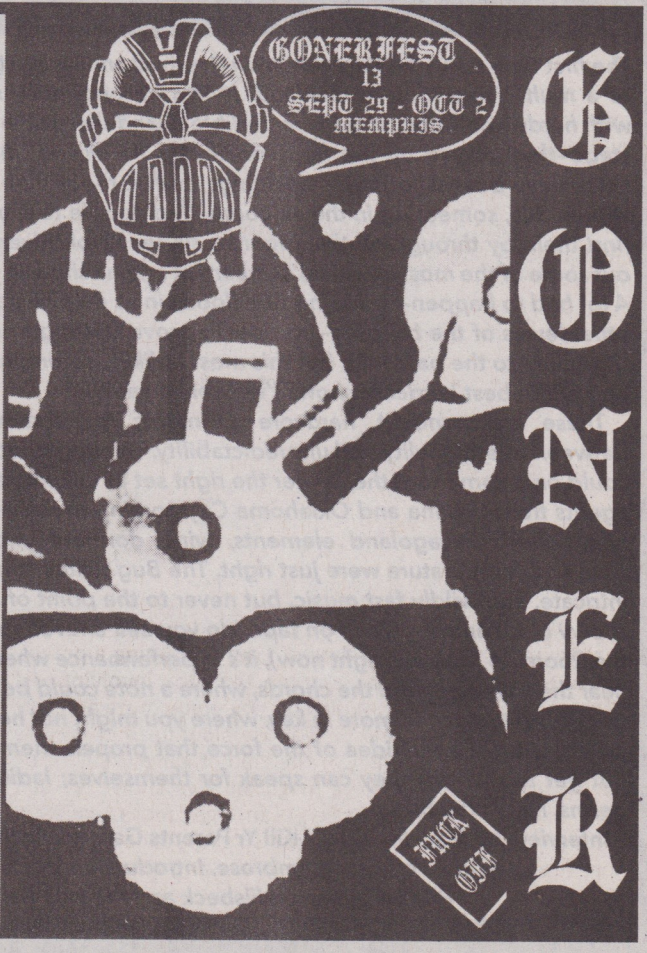
LABEL::DISTRO
ALLWEKNOW.INFO

ANGRY ANGLES LP

NOTS LP



SPRAY PAINT LP & 7"



ANYONE CAN BE THE BUG

The first time I saw the Bug was in on the third and highest story of a multi-tiered club in Oakland. It was an enormous space with hardwood floors, a really incredible chandelier and a huge stage—they played on the floor, obviously. I'd like to imagine there have been a lot more weddings in that room than punk shows. Still, something in the air compelled people to mosh, to find their joy through all the anger as singer Ralph Rivera laid out some of the most real shit I've heard at a punk show in years. A lot had to happen—including two floods in as many weeks on other levels of the building—in order to move this gig from the basement to the ballroom, but this most unlikely setting hosted one of the best hardcore shows I've seen in years.

These transcendent hardcore moments lie somewhere between intentionality and unpredictability. The Bug's outbreak could only come together under the right set of circumstances; agents from Urbana and Oklahoma City coming together with entrenched Chicagoland elements, lying dormant until the time and temperature were just right. The Bug writes complex, intricate, and wildly fast music, but never to the point of being showy or technical. Live or on tape (do yourself a favor and jam the Room 44 Sessions right now), it's in performance where you hear the music beyond the chords, where a note could be sharp but sound that much more in key, where you might not hear the words but get a real idea of the force that propels them. Let's not get too wordy, they can speak for themselves; ladies and germs, here's the Bug.

Interview by Macklin Reed / Kill Yr Parents Garden. *Additional questions by Grace Ambrose. Introduction by Eli Wald. Photos by Garett Fisbeck and Maddie Rehayem*

MRR: Hello America. I am here with...
TYLER: Hello I'm Tyler.

MRR: No who am I here with?
TYLER: I'm Tyler?
RALPH: That's right, *we're theeeeeeee Bug*! [*hiss*]
ALL: *THEE BUUUUG...*

MRR: Who's in the Bug?
RALPH: Ralph...Rivera...Jr.
KALE: Kale.
GREG: I'm Grego.

MRR: Cool...Uh, I don't care what you do. When did you start being a band?
ALL: End of 2014?

MRR: And how?
TYLER: It was just me, Ralph, and Kale.

MRR: Formed out of...
TYLER: The death of Rainbow Party.
RALPH: This timeline is fucked up because Rainbow Party was a band in 2013. We played our first show in 2013, so the Bug started at the end of 2013.

MRR: Why didn't Rainbow Party work?
KALE: No comment. No comment...
TYLER: Oh, I'll comment. Because we didn't know how to do what we're doing now. It was too fuckin' hard.
GREG: And I wasn't here.
TYLER: Greg wasn't here and it was too complicated for us.
RALPH: I think the concepts we were hashing out in Rainbow Party weren't fully realized. Like they said, we got too big for our britches.
KALE: Also I learned how to program drums into a drum machine and then I could play the ideas that way to Tyler and Ralph and they could hear my ideas more fully realized than I can communicate with my mouth.
TYLER: Yeah, that's true.

MRR: So we see that technology is truly better than humans. Do you guys like technology?

RALPH: I definitely appreciate the benefits that it gives us, and the instantaneous dissemination of information amongst people who maybe are traditionally marginalized or spread apart...that's a good thing. Just that acess to information throughout all time is really cool. But I think in a lot of ways it destroys interpersonal relationships. It destroys actual face-to-face communications. I don't appreciate that the flip side to all this information being accessible is that there isn't any time to really digest it and like, form an opinion on what it means to you beyond a fast click of a button. That's all it is. A click of a button and it's all over to you.

KALE: There are pros and cons to everything obviously. We're using technology to do this interview right now.

TYLER: I think it's a very useful tool, and for some people it's a means to survival, but for other people it just magnifies the fact that they're a fucking asshole.

GREG: Well, without technology I guess amps wouldn't work so I guess I can't knock it too much. I kinda suck at technology but that's okay because not everybody has to be good at it. I try to make the best of it. It can be a bummer when people use it the wrong way to be anonymous and say shitty things and fuck over people on the internet. That shit bums me out a lot.

TYLER: Someday when I buy that fucking canoe from you and I move to Northern Minnesota and I live in the woods I'm gonna leave technology behind and it's gonna be fucking tight.

[Conversation derails to "cars and canoes are technology" nitpicking, pointing out flaws in the above plan.]

MRR: I kinda get this idea that the idea of the Bug is about this infection or virus that's creeped in to society, like uh, cell phones, or...well, I'm asking you! What is it?

RALPH: We chose it specifically because of how many ways it can be interpreted the term "the Bug" can be interpreted. I feel like all of those things are right in a way. But I think the most immediate interpretation is that we represent not that infestation, but a glitch in that system where it's more of a rejection of the way things are. Like the fucking spectacle. Like, all eyes are watching this one thing at all times and that dictates how you think. That dictates your relationships that you have and that you choose to maintain. The Bug represents the antithesis to that. In my head I formulated it like, society being this false glow that seeks and consumes everybody. We are the opposite of that. The shit that's cast away in society is what the Bug is. That's a really '80s punk answer... *[laughs]*

TYLER: We didn't want to just pick a name like uh, fuckin'...Chain Violence. *[laughs]*

RALPH: What? That's good.

TYLER: Our first EP is going to be called *Chain Violence*. We wanted to have a legit name that actually means something. It has multiple interpretations, like you can be the bug that infects everything. Or your shit's bugged, cause they're literally listening to everything that we're saying right now.

KALE: Mmhm. Like a sickness.

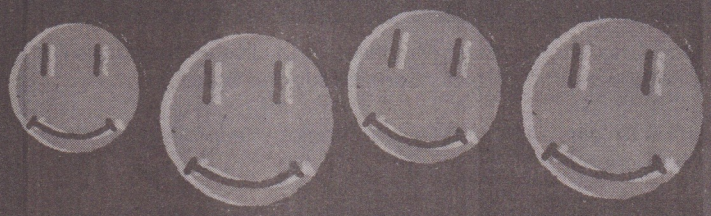
RALPH: Like you caught a nasty bug. Like buggin' out. You're losin' your head.

GREG: In a broad way the Bug is like an interruption in a system or pattern and I feel like were kinda being a Bug in that way.

RALPH: When we first came we talked about how all of us have contributed to or been a part of significant falling outs of the city of Chicago, like, we just bug people.

KALE: We are literally the bug.

RALPH: We don't try to fuck with people who don't deserve it, but you know



who I'm talking about, like there's assholes in Chicago that deserve to get their shit called out and if we can agitate them then good. They don't deserve to, you know, get away with their shit.

MRR: So when we were in Oklahoma, Tyler told me how some kid came to him and was like "you guys are so fast!" and how that made you realize that bands don't really play that fast anymore. Was it a conscious decision to be like a really noisy and abrasive band in a time when everyone's just doing like, pogo beats...

KALE: I'm surprised how much we've actually gotten that. I've just naturally always played fast. I've always considered playing fast to be the main facet of punk. Not that it requires you to, but that just occurs most naturally to me.

TYLER: I've also never not played fast in a band because what the hell else ya gonna do? *[laughs]* But on top of that, people are also surprised that were angry. It's confusing but I think it's because right now in punk, the in vogue thing is to be *weird*, and it's not that you're angry, it's that you're *crazy* and *weird* and you like goo and shit. And you like snot running down your fucking nose. And let me tell you, I'm sick right now and it's not fun. But I think people just forgot that you're allowed to be angry.

KALE: I had snot running down my nose during the whole the Bug set today and I couldn't wipe it cause I was playing fast.

RALPH: That's punk dude. That's what it is.

KALE: It's natural.

RALPH: I think that shit has caught me off guard too. I think the rage and anger and disgust that used to be associated with punk has just kinda been supplanted by being like a fucking fashionista. Not to say you shouldn't look the way you wanna look. I think punk has been codified in to being like one certain thing. That always happens...A trend catches on and right now it's, like Tyler said, it's *bein' fuckin' wiiild*. I think a lot of people are like that but not everybody is. Like, I'm not like a tough person. I don't try to be scary. I don't want to intimidate anybody so I don't think we've tried to portray ourselves as anything other than what we are. There's a lot of fuckin' fantasy going on. Like, we're gonna live out this '80s movie. Like we're gonna cut this chicken's head off. We're gonna like, light off fireworks, but it's not Cleveland and you're not actually using dynamite and locking the doors so no one can get out. You're just lighting off fireworks my little brother is allowed to play with. It's not crazy or weird. It's not that wild...we got really derailed.

KALE: Moving on...

TYLER: People can do whatever they want. If they're actually weird and want to play mid-tempo catchy ass punk that's fine, it's just not what I've ever done...It's hardcore punk. Why is that surprising?

RALPH: I feel like Chicago's always been that. Even in the past few years when all these trends popped up, I don't think we ever got hit heavily by the slime punk thing. Even though Cülo like started that. They were always faster and more interesting than the bands that tried to rip them off. And like, Gas Rag I guess could be put in that category, and like Ooze and Big Zit, but those bands actually play with everything they have. I think this part of the Midwest and the Midwest in general...we didn't lose everything like a lot of places did, when that trend kinda caught on. [*laughs*]

MRR: What do you think about Chicago right now? I kinda feel like no one talks or does anything too crazy. Most bands just set up, play, and break down like nothing happened.

TYLER: Like, that happens in Chicago a lot?

KALE: It definitely does.

RALPH: I think the Wrong and Sputter and Boots make a point to say things between songs, and like, in one way or another, let people know what the fuck they're about. I think they each approach it in a different way. That's awesome. But I guess I'd agree with your general assessment. Like, Chicago is just kind of part of a larger nationwide scene of people just kinda being like "Meh. We wrote these songs but we don't really care if you know about us or them."

KALE: I don't think it's related just to Chicago. It's spot on but not limited to Chicago. What came to my mind immediately was that Everything Is Not OK fest. I honestly thought that there would be more thought and speech and ideas and feelings communicated than there were.

RALPH: No one said shit.

KALE: No one said shit the whole time and that's not a slight to anyone that played or organized it. And one of the things that drove me in the early stages of being involved in hardcore punk was seeing these bands that would talk and disseminate information and talk about how they feel and talk about things that were important to them. Sometimes it didn't even like, always 100% align with how I felt or what was going on. Just being there and being involved and hearing these people basically moved me and made me want to be involved in this music and in 2015, it doesn't seem like, in the US, that is very important anymore. I find that to be strange.

RALPH: Last Chaos in Tejas the only band I saw that said anything was a band from Mexico and a band from Spain and Los Crudos, and he's known for being outspoken. I was like holy hell.

TYLER: I think Chicago is in a weird transitional phase right now. I'm sure this is worldwide but in Chicago things are always up and down, you know? I think things are at a low point but things are looking very positive. Things are going to start happening soon. It's confusing too because for the first time in forever, the majority of shows are on the South side. Chicago's at a very different place than it's ever been since I've been involved in punk.

GREG: I'm the newest resident here, shortly followed by Kale, but I definitely see the ups and downs. I think that there is a lot of genuine passion going on and people are passionate about things whether it be, you know, fighting a system, or unfortunately some other pretty bad bullshit, you know people writing lyrics to make other people uncomfortable. All that pushes people away. It's unfortunate but it's important that we keep our heads together and stay a community. Being in a genuine band that speaks out during, getting some voices heard during the set is a great thing. I do really enjoy that about Chicago.

KALE: Chicago punk seems very polarized. There are a lot of different groups doing different things. Not necessarily a totally bad thing. But with all of that comes with a lot of stereotyping of certain punks and how they act and what they do. Like, talking about Dee Dee's Funky X Lab, Tyler's [old] house, saying "All the shows there are the same. the Bug plays every one." At that point, we had actually never played there. Like, you're just stereotyping. That house has a stigma. They have a stigma of like, who they are and how those people act and they don't try to humanly connect with those people because they already assume...

RALPH: Things are weird right now, but I feel like we got our shit together a little bit more. It's hard to speak in front of people. I don't expect everybody to do it. But even the ones who don't do it, I can still tell there's a legitimate

passion behind it. Like Crude Humor or Haki don't say anything between songs but they're still saying something with what they're doing. I can tell they actually wanna be there and they're not bored and going through the motions, like ripping off New York hardcore for like the fifteen thousandth time. Like no one's covered "Last Warning" before. *[laughs]* No dude, I like Agnostic Front too.

I think there are powerful things going on and people are more comfortable now than in a long time expressing themselves. Like it's hard, you know. I'm saying this as a straight cis dude. I can say I feel comfortable, maybe not everybody does. But people who are friends with each other are really supportive. They're going to each other's shows, helping get the word out about this shit. I don't really give a fuck about the rest of Chicago. If they don't want to be a part of that or they've proven themselves indecent towards anyone else, I don't give a shit if they feel left out. I feel like this part is doing really well and it's showing–I don't want to speak too highly, but...a force to be reckoned with.

TYLER: I think now more than ever, people are significantly more genuine and passionate and involved for the right reasons, and actually care about things in a way I've never seen before. Rewind to fucking four years ago, you got a bunch of jocks moshing extra fuckin' hard and doing sketchy shit.

MRR: Doing pushups.

TYLER: Doing fuckin' pushups, pretending to be fucking wild but they're not. Swingin' stupid ass chains at shows.

RALPH: Dangling Nazi flags outside their van on tour to Cleveland...Duress.

TYLER: For real, fuck that band. People were doing stupid shit that would absolutely not fly these days. It's just a weird contrast where, you're right, people don't say anything at shows these days, yet at the same time Chicago is more passionate than it has ever been.

KALE: If I'm going to be fucking stereotyped or thrown in to a perceived group, if that groups the group that like, cares and tries to be as welcoming as possible, than so be it.

MRR: ...I thought you liked screamo.

[laughter]

TYLER: Also, people think we're a screamo band.

RALPH: He's wearing an 86 Mentality hoodie. You ever see a screamo band wear an 86 Mentality hoodie?

TYLER: One of the guitar players from 86 Mentality looked like a screamo kid.

MRR: You texted me the other day and asked me to name twelve cities to play in in California. "Uh... San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Santa Rosa, Fresno, San Diego, Sacramento. Stockton? Redding? Long Beach? Crockett?" I live here and I don't wanna drive far enough to go to most of those places. The Bug seems to pride itself on playing everywhere where the rest of us think we don't wanna be. You played with teen MCs in Milwaukee last week. You went to Hattiesburg, MS before everyone went to Hattiesburg, MS. You'll probably never play in New York. Why? What crazy tour plan are you coming up with next?

RALPH: Hahahaha. Well, we needed to know what two weeks in California would look like because a) we realized that incorporating California into a proper Great Plains/Northwest/West Coast/Southwest tour would require a minimum of five weeks total, so why not just cut it out and do it separately? and b) we figured we'd end the Cali excursion in San Jose and fly out to Hawaii for a few days. Why? One question, a lot of answers, but the most relevant one is where we come from. I grew up in NWI, Tyler in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, Grego in central Illinois, Kale in Oklahoma City. We grew up isolated and stranded from culture. Hell, when I was growing up, we were lucky if Chicago got a cool touring band! And I can't speak for everyone, but I knew that what we had in NWI was special, powerful, maybe not unique, but certainly OURS. We wanted to share it, but we had no one to share it with until much, much later. And I think it's important to keep those things in mind when you're booking a tour. There are kids in small, nowhere towns starting bands, writing zines, putting out their friends tapes, or just sitting around listening to AFI and *Give Me Convenience Or Give Me Death* ad infinitum because that's what they can find at the local Best Buy, that will lose their shit for you because you sought them out.

I think we've all done the "correct" way to tour, I've done the nine-day Pittsburgh / Philly / NYC / Boston thing. But in the waning daylight of my youth, I can't stomach that ridiculous standard. Undeniably, there are a lot of hardworking, talented, gracious people in those cities, but do you know how many bands I know, how many I've been in, that drive straight to Pittsburgh on their first day of tour? What's the rationale behind committing to an over seven-hour drive when there are a minimum of three or four cities with thriving scenes between here and there. They are worth playing, but there are other cities out there, other towns, other little enclaves of genius that dot the highways between those big cultural meccas. Even taking the

"financial" question into consideration, you're not guaranteed to make six or seven hundred dollars just because you played New York. You're not Hoax. Five other bands played New York City this week, maybe the same night you played there. Logistically, financially, just from a standpoint of pure punk partisanship, endeavoring to *only* play big cities is bullshit. This country is garbage, but it's also beautiful. There's a fucking millennia of culture crammed into just a few centuries and a lot of it came from weirdos stuck in the mud in the middle of nowhere. There is so, so, so much more to experience than just fucking Bushwick coffee shops.

We've got so many stupid tour routes drawn up on scrap pieces of paper. California / TJ / Hawaii in two weeks. That three and half week Great Plains to Southwest tour. Three and a half weeks on the east coast all the way up to the Atlantic Provinces. We've been trying to figure out a way to fly out to the Northwest, drive through Canada, and into Alaska. Mexico. Florida/Puerto Rico. Indiana only tour. Michigan only tour. Wisconsin and the UP. The infestation knows no bounds.

MRR: You cover American Hate. You cover the other Bug(g). You've probably played your versions of these songs in front of the people who wrote them and in front of rooms full of people who have no idea that they are covers. It's an honorific gesture–and knowing you all, also a bit of a taunting one. Has anyone ever covered the Bug? How do you see the Bug fitting into the larger ecosystem of DIY punk and hardcore, in the US and beyond? In other words, who are your peers, and why?

RALPH: Yeah, you're dead on. It's shit-talking, it's a jab at them to get them to one-up us, if possible, but it's absolutely "Hey! You wrote a great song that we love!" It's important to challenge as well as praise your friends for the great things they do. No one has covered the Bug just yet, but American Hate has threatened a ten minute jam version, I believe, "Sunday Sermon Blues." I could be making that up, but if anyone can pull that off, it's them.

You know, when we started, we anticipated being our only fans. We've certainly remained our biggest, but while a lot of people still don't get what we're doing, we've made some really good, I hesitate to say connections, but let's pretend there are no jerkbag business connotations to that word and roll with it. At home, Porno Glows, Negative Scanner, Dagger, CCTV. In the larger punk cosmos: American Hate, Bugg, Mozart, Uranium Club, Lemonade, No Approach, Menthol, In School, Kaleidoscope, GLOSS, Big Bleach, Baghead, Dumspell, Pryss, Gush. The cities of Springfield, IL and Murray, KY. There are a lot more, bands that we respect and admire from a distance like Pig DNA or JJ Doll. I think punk is capable of a lot more than just sick intros and I think those bands embody that "something more." Bands that are intentional in the things they do and say, in how they do and say them. Aesthetically, sonically, ethically, those are the bands doing the things we wanna see more of and taking up the space they deserve.

MRR: Business bullshit: what's next? You just recorded, with Amos from Tenement, yeah? What's happening with those tracks? Plug the Bug-related shit here so people everywhere can read about it.

RALPH: Well, Room 31 (The Committee For Mass Dissemination and Infinite Repetition) has been in a state of turmoil since saboteurs, well, saboteured our main duplication machine. They have recently been restored to peak condition, and thus the next phase of the Bug Party Plan begins with finally, officially releasing the Room 44 tape for mass-consumption. After that, the Amos Pitsch engineered recordings will be appear on a seven inch vinyl record entitled Humbug; or, So Many Awful Things, to be co-released by Not Normal Tapes and IFB Records. Then a fall tour, the First Annual Infestational (a celebration of all things guaranteed to bug you out!), and a Mexico tour with Minneapolis heavyweights LEMONADE.

MRR: Punk trend predictions. What will follow slime/weird punk and what's the next leather glove?

RALPH: No one is going to agree with me on this but I think because of the habits of the slime punk craze, I legitimately think that a very intense, unbelievably awful straightedge phase is around the corner.

MRR: The pendulum swings.

KALE: Like reactionary straightedge.

RALPH: Classic Matt Rowland mosh world cult straightedge and people being dickheads and the new leather glove will be the Supreme hat.

TYLER: I think it's already been proven but I think people are getting in to more weird, I don't know, weird artsy shit, like what's that band? Suburban Lawns and shit like that? Like weird art freak music, which is cool, but it's slow so I don't get it. *[laughs]*

KALE: Suburban Lawns is sick.

TYLER: I don't know the next leather glove.

RALPH: Bolo tie, for sure dude.

KALE: We didn't have that shit in Oklahoma.

MRR: You just have a bunch of longhairs.

KALE: 2015 Oklahoma has long hairs...

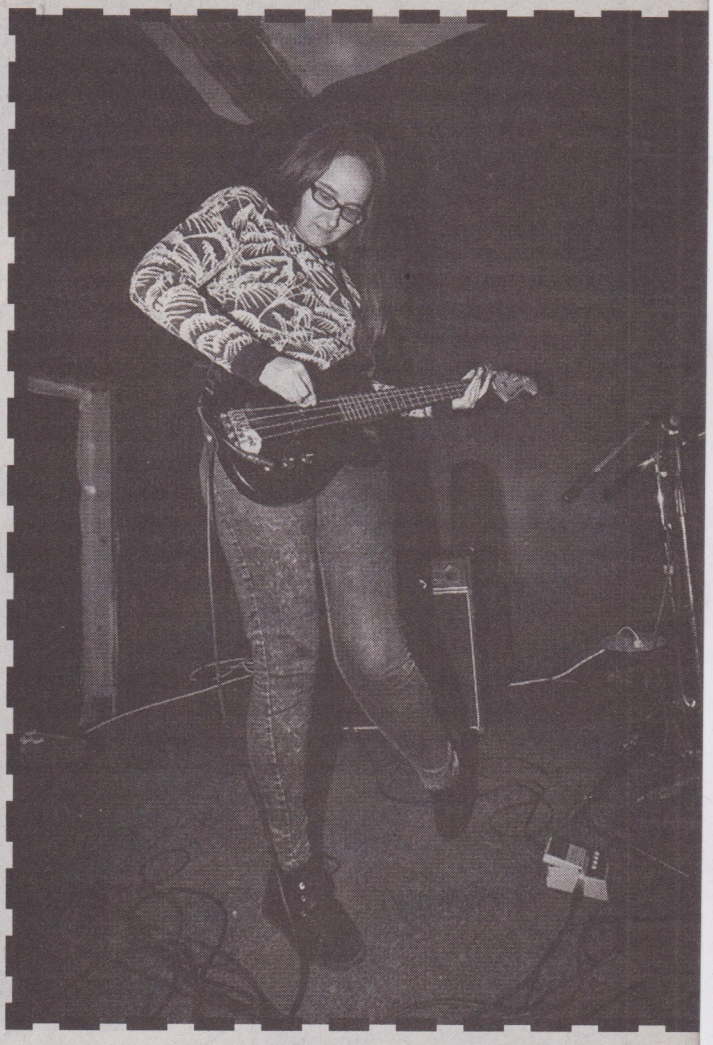
GREG: I think there's a chance '90s pop country and overalls and boots could be...maybe 2016.

MRR: You heard it first, America. Stud your overalls.

notnormaltapes.bandcamp.com

NORMS

Anna, bass / Fefi, guitar
Marci, drums / Viktor, vocals



Norms is slang for normals, a pejorative for the kind of rat-race zombies depicted in John Carpenter's They Live—in other words, most people and most of society. But for Budapest Hungary's Norms, the name is a kind of negative affirmation—of the honest struggle against becoming "a norm" yourself; a struggle that always ultimately comes back to what vocalist and MRR columnist Viktor Vargyai often calls "how you do your punk." Norms' music reflects not just their eclectic influences mentioned below, but also trying to push yourself and those around you to be punk beyond punk's own norms and trends, punk on the inside, in an old-world city like Budapest, and in a definitively abnormal country like Hungary. For years now I've been able to have some of the best conversations about "punk in general" with all the members of Norms, whether in late-night dive bars in Budapest or while swimming at Lake Velencei, and maybe even later that night watching them play their brand of crazed, hypnotic, worm-dance-inducing thrash discord. Coming from what many people see as a punk Mecca of the Bay Area, I actually always feel more invigorated and inspired about what punk could actually be—what the fabric of shared perspective is that keeps punks beautifully weird, discontented, and internationally connected—after being a part of Norms' world in Budapest for a few days. Best of all, by the end of it I'm always more sure than ever that none of us are anywhere close to normal.

Interview by Attila Borics. Introduction by Spencer R.
Photos provided by the band.

MRR: How would you introduce your band besides listing each member's name and instrument?

Marci: A collision of four people's ideas on punk music regurgitating itself.

Viktor: Punks from Budapest playing hardcore. Wearing parent clothes. Except for Marci—he owns no real shirts at all.

Fefi: It was about five years ago when I woke up to go to high school and saw a totally drunk e-mail from Viktor written at 4:00 AM which started like "I don't know where you live, I don't know what you do, but we will start a hardcore band." And so it happened. Anna used to play harp so she obviously became our bass player and Marci is the best drummer on the continent (at least). Also, we are friends who love punk.

Anna: I was in my dirty room in a dorm in Russia eating cheap unhealthy food when Viktor wrote me on MSN that we should start a band together and I could play the bass guitar. I had never been in a band before but liked the idea from the very beginning and could not wait to get home and start it.

MRR: Is there a well articulated idea or concept behind this band or is it more like a result of a collaboration of the right individuals in the right place and the right time and if one removed one bolt the whole structure would change into something quite different?

Marci: Both.

Fefi: We had some abstract ideas or visions before starting to practice, like being influenced by Exuma and Swans and Void equally or "we'll be the hardcore band that grins on the nightbus because we know we can do whatever we want" as it was written in Viktor's first drunk e-mail. But in the end it just turned out to be like this, weird stupid hardcore punk. It wouldn't be the same without any of us but I can't really imagine Norms staying together that way.

Viktor: There is a concept and many thoughts beyond this band, maybe too many that they cast each other off. The basic directive was to gather people who are alike in some things but very different in others and play hardcore that is silly, disintegrated, and very lo-fi. As Fefi mentioned among the first references that we discussed were Born Against, Die Kreuzen, Exuma, and such theoretical feelings as watching Werner Herzog movies backwards. I think it would be a sad agenda to pick some specific bands and replicate whatever they do with whoever is capable of a copycat job but it would be a lie to indolently state "we just do whatever and never think of anything." We manipulate each other too, or I know that I do.

I always believed that the best way to do your art is to create an established environment within which you enjoy full autonomy and total creative freedom. I like to live and work in bubbles and this band is a great bubble. We knew who we wanted to do what but the how was, is, and will always be dictated by the individuals actually making the noise.

Anna: I can't imagine this band staying together if any of us would quit. To me it is not just one of my bands but the only one in which I feel really comfortable and love the others. To be

in this band belongs to my personality so much now and this is because somehow we fit well together. We are different in many ways but also we are very similar in our love of music and how we think about our own noise. What I also like is that no one ever tries to change my personality. Originally I am a quiet person and I think it is good as it is. Outsiders cannot imagine I really play in a hardcore punk band but to me it makes it even better. I see our band as fierce but somehow charming. I hope there are other people out there who think the same after watching us live.

MRR: On any level, do you consider Norms to be political?

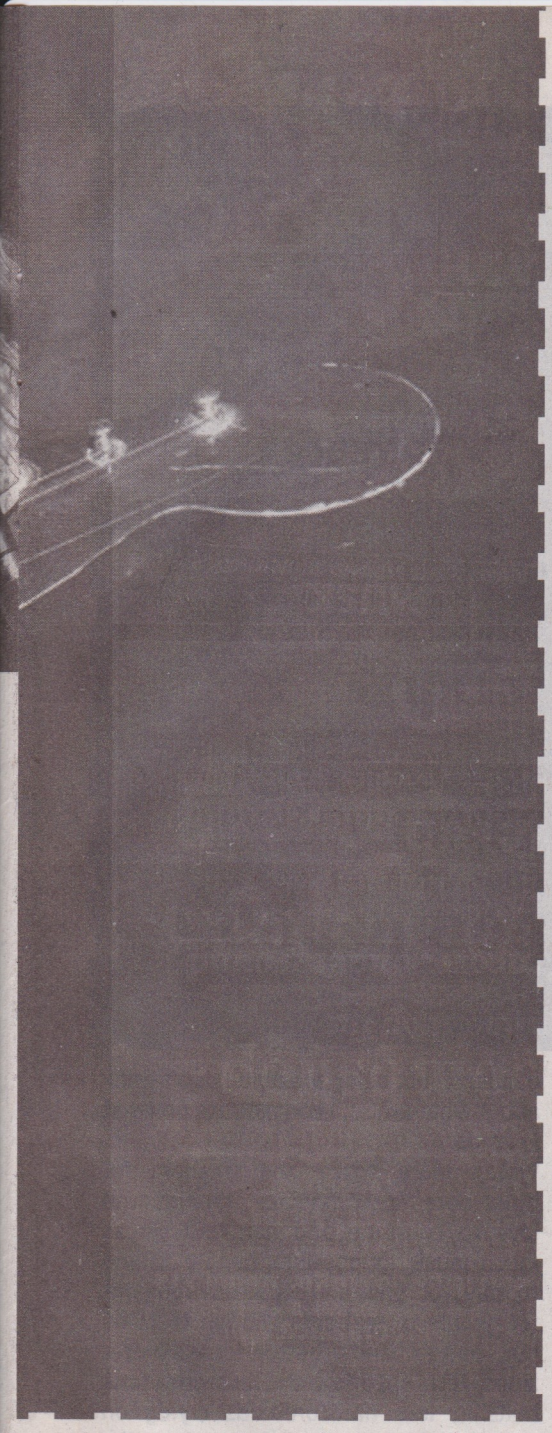
Marci: Yes.

Viktor: I do since I pathologically hate all and every authority and despise a large part of society. It also bums me out that many times people think that I'm discussing my personal emotional dramas when I write songs about the fascist regime of the stock market.

I try to pick less direct topics and look for the systems beyond how politics are affecting our lives but yeah mostly I just write bad rhymes out of obscure articles written by paranoid journalists.

For me even such things as time, life goals, society, job interviews are all political issues. For sure people would be better off with reading books than our inserts but I try to do my best. Also our music shatters consumer culture.

Anna: I have always had doubts also in my personal life if it is a waste to spend any time caring about politics and never could completely decide. But politics influence all of our lives just like many other things and I think nowadays in Hungary it influences much more that it should. I think in our community there are values which are so obvious that it



makes no sense to speak them out but there are situations when it is OK to have a clear idea about things and share it with others.

MRR: The recent refugee crisis puts the European Union and its member states in the news quite frequently these days, which provides some information about Hungary and its politics for the global audience. Is there something you would add? How would you describe living in Hungary? To me it appears that it has a large influence on your message, but for outsiders it might be hard to interpret without your comments.

Fefi: I think it's kind of funny and absurd how the idiot government of this small stupid shithole country that never gives, only takes out from the European commonwealth can dictate anything in this situation. I really cannot see life getting less miserable in this country anytime soon, the rich are getting richer and the poor are constantly humiliated, all soaked in stupid, pathetic propaganda. I still couldn't really imagine living anywhere else but here so I just try to improve my personal environment in order to not to feel shitty all the time. Playing in Norms is a part of it too.

Marci: If you have ever heard the term "Hungarian virtue" and know what it is, it might explain a lot. We love to brag about how bad shit is over here, drink wine, and cry about it a lot. This eventually evolved to people born bitter and disillusioned. By now it's like if the masses would indeed cry out for elongation of the millenia-long self-flagellation.

Viktor: If I have to think within capitalist democracy then what this country painfully lacks is a solid base of citizens which in Hungarian is synonymous with an educated middle class. Here that's a paranoid, neurotic fucking crowd who are afraid to let anyone be one of them and betray anyone poorer or even equally rich to them. They also hate those up higher but serve their masters without question and vote for those who promise a better tomorrow even if they will fail to bring it. Educated, conscious people is who we're missing. I miss having a shadow society that knows how to be civilized even if the ruling party is a far right one. Here when it turns out that our leaders are fascists then people do not turn against them but cheer even more. I think the only way to really destroy any authority is to make them irrelevant...or kill them all. That works as well.

Anna: In the last few years there were so many points when I thought it simply could not get any worse but we always got just deeper and deeper in shit. So the attitude of our government to the refugee crisis is not a surprise at all. Many young and talented people have already left the country and not just because of the higher salaries but also because they were disgusted by everything that happens here day by day. The government is full of totally dumb idiot people and they support their idiot friends in the whole country. So you have to be stupid enough to get in high position and steal as much money as you can without even trying to make any effort to do it in secret. But I think the biggest problem is not with these stupid politicians but in the heads of the people, as there are still many of them who just clap for this, hate refugees, and ignore obvious facts. The Hungarian punk scene here is like an oasis surrounded by a wonder wall.

MRR: As for the sound, Norms sticks out from the pool of contemporary Hungarian bands. This may relate to one of the previous questions: Is your sound also a concept or a statement?

Marci: Both. For the concept side I personally really want to shape our sound as something visceral and urgent, which then mutates itself to our statement, which is telling *you* to fuck off.

Viktor: I would be more happy if it were a statement since I think for a band the music should say more than the lyrics do and as we go along in time I believe more in musical radicalism. Also for me a concept is a frame while a statement is rather the content. In our case hardcore is the concept and how we play it is our statement.

Most of the music is written by Fefi but he is democratic enough to hear our suggestions. If we ever say that something should sound different it is because we feel it would be more expressive, not because it would sound better. The lucky thing is when the two match, but I do not have problem with difficult listening.

MRR: As far as I can tell, you guys are weathered veterans in terms of touring in foreign countries and visiting foreign punk scenes, not just as Norms but with your other present and former bands. What is your experience? I'd like to hear all the nice and negative things. Is there any specific property or attitude of the Hungarian scene that you did not find anywhere else on your trips or the is the uniqueness of the Hungarian scene is just a myth invented by Hungarians?

Marci: We are an awkward kind.

Fefi: Sometimes foreign people don't seem to understand that Hungarians like sitting

with their friends completely silent. Like come on, just have some anxiety already, that's what we are all about.

Viktor. Maybe Hungarians make a bigger deal out of hosting bands and doing shows. We experienced that many times people were not bothered to stop their daily routines because we were their guests. For example once a promoter was doing speed and blasting music and watching international news on Hungary on full volume until the morning in the same room with us while we were sleeping on his floor. I don't say that he was rude but it was interesting—Hungarians in the same situation would have behaved like anxious hotel managers wanting to please their guests the most. It was not what I would have required but what I have realized.

We also learned in Vienna that you never have a guest list for DIY shows and you always pay the bands equally. Here everybody wants to sneak in and only the touring foreign bands get any money.

But mostly it's the same everywhere else after you visit enough places.

Anna: Norms is the only band I was on tour with but now have some experiences. There are differences between spots but I think it depends on the people who organize the shows and who come to see us, not the nationality. Of course I have some favorite places like Berlin which is always cool but also I loved playing in a tiny Belgian town to three 50+ people in a very small room. If the people are nice it cannot be bad. As a girl I think I have no high expectations regarding comfort, it happened that I kinda broke my ankle on the second day of the tour, got beaten by bugs in a squat and also got a cold, but never wanted to come home. I enjoy each moment I can spend with my friends travelling around Europe.

MRR: OK, now let me turn around the previous question: what do you miss from Hungarian punk?

Marci: Intense dedication from other people. We, as a band and as individuals are very dedicated to what we are doing, but this is not as common here as it should be.

Fefi: If you miss something in punk than you make it happen. I'm really happy there are more and more young people coming to the shows, especially girls, forming bands, or just being present. I don't think about what I miss, I concentrate on what I can do.

Viktor: More space and freedom for girls, more music maniacs AKA kids who love to consume and nerd out on as much music as possible, people willing to pay for shows, better environment for people to feel safe enough to come out, better bands, better ideas, better zines, less opportunism, less grey-zone bullshit, less hardcore kids crying on corporate sponsored platforms about the lack of respect and humility, someone bootlegging Shitlickers shirts.

MRR: Back to "uniqueness." This next one relates to that. I often read that punk bands of Eastern Bloc countries tend to have a unique sound and an overall exciting atmosphere, which even changes from country to country. According to punk "historians" this is possibly due to the couple of decades of isolation from the Western World where punk was inoculated. What do you think about that?

Fefi: The isolation is very important because it let things grow and evolve

differently but I don't think that's the only reason. Eastern Europeans never had as much cultural capital as the Western punks did, so while a lot of bands are / were much more interesting than their American counterparts, no one got to know them because they didn't have the infrastructure or whatever. I'm not saying it's bad by all means though, I like these well-kept punk secrets. Also yes, we are an awkward kind, we do weird shit.

Viktor: Places like Poland and Yugoslavia were isolated regarding their outputs but being the capital of the black markets of central and Eastern Europe those countries had access to almost as many culture as we do now with internet. First I was floored when I read an interview from the '80s with Tožibabe that referenced United Mutation but if you go through the catalogue of state pressed and bootleg records from that era I think you might wish that would be the base of people's musical knowledge.

I think isolation could be a benefit in creativity when it makes the output brave enough and doesn't harm the state of mind of the creators. I do think inputs are important but it's bad when one thinks that the only way to get your voice heard is to translate your art into already accepted forms. That's why pre-internet hardcore was so much better and labeled sounds to countries since they were locked inside their lands. Then maybe lacking a lingua franca people sang in their own lyrics not expecting international tours and it made their music say more. Now this is totally damaged and many bands want to please channels such as zines, labels, and audiences to make it. When you are locked away you cannot make it. Still there are many amazing things that have come from this country such as Béla Tarr, VHK, authors such as some Lászlós and Péters. I hope our LP is going to be the *Son of Saul* of hardcore.

Anna: Eastern European punk bands may be different because they always had more reason to revolt. It is different to be punk in a developed Western European country than here where democracy never had enough space to develop. This is something that explains also for example why so many tourists from the West fall in love with Budapest. It has everything they need but the plus is the little chaos that makes it interesting. The lack of perfection is the thing that makes it exciting, and this is also true of punk.

MRR: The main reason for my previous question was to give a little bit of introduction to my next. You guys have record a cover song from the '80s Hungarian band Modells for your last record. That number will be also featured on a compilation of contemporary Hungarian bands covering songs from the '80s. This implies a strong connection between the past and the present. Is that true or relevant?

Fefi: That Modells song is about the fear and vulnerability of a person living in a totalitarian system that could do whatever it wants with her. I think it has some of the best and most expressive lyrics ever written by a Hungarian punk band with that really stressful music. They were really sticking out from the contemporary scene. About the connection between the past and present: I was born a couple of years after the so-called "democratic transformation," but I can perfectly resonate with these lyrics. The freedom is new, people are the same.

Viktor: I disagree with the common statement that the present is reminiscent of the past since clearly people have way more independence and opportunities to live with and express themselves nowadays. I think it's counterproductive that older generations want to force their memories on the younger crowds to sell them artificial nostalgia. Even if there is repetition in history, acting as if punk or anything else except for plants was perennial would also make us believe that everything that happens is way beyond our will and we can't do anything to break this cycle.

I do not want to talk shit on that compilation but I do see it as a typical example of a failed attempt as to what its initial goal was. It wants to present the current scene with present bands covering old songs. It could be seen as a bridge between generations but our past is not something that we have to cope with but something we should learn about and not repeat but improve. Since covers mostly butcher original songs and if there's one thing that the internet has taught us it is to appreciate terrible recordings the same way as we do over-produced ones, I think this comp is fun but not relevant. I do think that it's important to explore culture in any directions of time but that's a really sad way to live in the past especially in someone else's. So these bands should concentrate on their present and should be influenced by their current environment.

But that Modells song is super good and it was very pleasing to sing it.

MRR: Punk music is simple, they say. To me it appears, that it takes quite lot of guts and creativeness to keep it simple yet still innovative. You guys are doing a good job at that. I happen to know that your creative energies not concentrated entirely to Norms. Fefi draws, Anna and Viktor are into writing and zines, and Marci is responsible for the shit sound (meant in a positive way) of numerous Hungarian punk/grind/noise bands. Come on, don't be shy, let me hear about your parallel activities!

Marci: I draw a lot of psyducks with saxophones in MS Paint at the office where I "work."

Fefi: I work full-time as a social worker at a daycare centre for mentally ill people, play in a couple of other bands, write a zine, sometimes draw some stuff for bands, release my friends' tapes under the name Szégyen Kazetták, and pet my cat friend Fibi.

Viktor: I'm a shitworker for this magazine, and am working on several different zines that are developing in my drawer. Sometimes I book shows, had and want to re-start a radio show, started a bedroom label and I also play in another band called Diskobra. Nowadays I like to take care of the tomato plants that I grow with my partner. I also like to take notes and dance without music.

Anna: I used to have a blog about books I read and another one about everything else. I may try to continue on this path, recently these blog posts were written only in my head. If I feel I have enough ideas maybe starting a zine would be cool. Nowadays I am really into cooking and of course eating. I love to try out new recipes or restaurants. By the way I have a boring job in a big company but at least it gives me enough freedom to care about those things which are important to me.

normsbp.bandcamp.com

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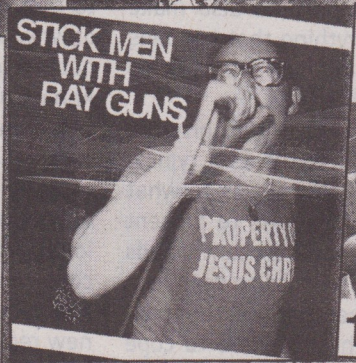

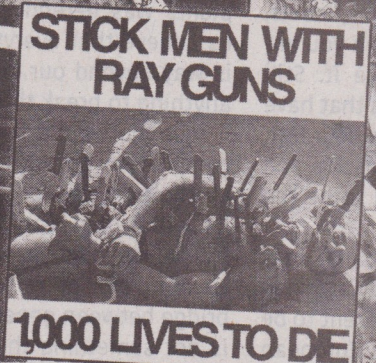

STICKMEN WITH RAY GUNS
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This whirlpool of different influences are mangled into a punk-sized knock in the face, with more afterthought instead of primitive rage. There's an intellectual vein running through, a rather ambitiously chiseled, type of music. Frankly, they sound like a non-electronic homage to all the minimal synth and minimal wave slash coldwave acts operating out there. Stretch it to an even more plausible theory—and you might end up with synth-punk without a synth. Somewhere and somehow we would like to put them into a melodic punk category, or rogue surf-punk—surfing on nails, bolts and steel through a decaying post-industrial society. Feel the hopelessness but be uplifted and rooted in the sense that they're playing just for you and your needs, even though your attitude says: "It's completely different!"

syndicate

Introduction by Repartiseraren Blog. Interview by MRR (Ministry of Recreational Research).
Photos are thanks to Carlos Garcia, Brandon Jourdan, and Ross McLean.

I do not think punk has any inherently revolutionary characteristics to it. Nor do I think that it prefigures a better society. But at the same time I don't think it is necessarily supposed to. It's a reaction to this world, not a solution to it.

MRR: Who are you and what do you play?
Will: Bass and vocals.
Sam: Guitar and vocals.
Lena: I play drums and do some "aahs" and other back-ups.

MRR: When did you start playing and had you played in any bands before?
Lena: We played our first show in October of 2014. We were lucky to get to open a really cool and memorable show: Rakta from Brazil and two Oakland powerhouses, Replica and Ragana.
Will: I played bass in two noisy hardcore bands, one of which, Mörpheme, is still sporadically active. This has been quite a departure from what I'm used to.
Lena: This is my first "real" band. I am pretty much learning drums as I go in this band—you can kind of tell. I played bass in an embarrassing street punk band in high school, luckily we left no evidence in the form of musical artifacts. And then I had a joke Oi! cover band in 2008 with some friends back in Arizona who would go on to do cooler things like Destruction Unit.
Sam: This is my first real band. I won't mention other endeavors as they might compromise my punk cultural capital.

MRR: How did you all meet?
Will: I met Lena at a show at the Swamp in Oakland a few years ago. As for Sam…
Sam: Back in high school I got a seemingly random call from this stressed out guy who told me he had just gotten out of jail. The cops had nabbed him at an anti Iraq war demonstration which I had helped organize. He claimed to be looking for legal help. Teenage paranoia kicked in. I was sure the guy was an undercover cop! Who would turn out to a demo with charged hair? How did he get my number anyway? We ended up being real good pals. 10 years or so later sometimes I still wonder if Will is a cop.

MRR: What sparked interest in getting the band started?
Will: Sam and I used to share an apartment and would often, drunkenly, play music together in a light-hearted way. I always really liked what we produced but doing so in any serious regard never lined up. Randomly though, the three of us were hanging out in a practice studio and just started playing Eskorbuto songs and riffs for what eventually became "Dust." Lena played some badass samba fill in one section and I think that more or less sealed the deal. Aside from that we're all nerds of some sort or another. That's the critical factor, really.
Lena: I had this long-deferred dream of learning the drums and while I was getting that started we decided to play together since we had similar musical tastes and got along well, and none of us had any other active music projects going.

MRR: Can you talk about the origin and meaning of your band name?
Will: I've always felt that Syndicate has a ring to it phonetically and looks nice written out. But it also has an organizational connotation to it that reflects what I write and think about. All it literally means is a group or collective of people coming together for a certain interest or cause. It could be in a political sense or otherwise. My interest in class struggle and the history of anarcho-syndicalism is part of it.
Lena: Yeah my understanding is that we are not interested in the "crime syndicate" connotation, but that our name is more in the spirit of "*sindicato*" of syndicalism.

MRR: What are the musical influences guiding Syndicate?
Lena: I wanted to play power pop and Will wanted to play post-punk...
Will: Yeah we've had to do some compromising. I don't know. Thesis, antithesis, synthesis...it plays out like that. Really though, Polish punk and coldwave as well as everything I've been listening to since I was fifteen. Somehow Yanka Dyagileva's ghost tends to hang out with me when I write music.
Lena: I like both ends of the punk mood spectrum so I kind of pulled from different styles, but also just starting out on drums, I had to focus on one beat and build from there and for me that happened to be Ramones-beat.
Sam: When we started to really figure out what our sound would be, I think I was listening to a bunch of Spanish and Swedish punk. We wanted to mix that with Polish style coldwave.

MRR: What are you singing about anyway?
Will: Initially I wrote a lot about state repression against social movements. I've always been drawn to songs that have a catchy sound and structure but also contain cynical lyrical content. Getting older and having to increasingly worry about one's security presents pretty staunch challenges to people with radical positions and ideas. It's a struggle to keep your formative perspective on the world when constantly having to work, while at the same time the community you shared these things with begins to fracture further and further. There is a Chaos Z song that deals with this directly which has been an influence on what I write. Assuming the online translator didn't lie to me, of course.
Lena: We try to talk about things we experience directly, though sometimes it's hard to tell where the metaphor ends and reality begins. I kind of like that ambiguity.
Sam: Some songs are more personal like "Counterfeit Life" and "Smoke and Mirrors" and others are based on experiences I'm moved by, but of which I am not the subject, like "Young Workers" and "Satellite City" for example. "Young Workers" is actually composed of poetry by a Chinese Foxconn worker who wrote extensively of life inundated with exploitation and alienation.

MRR: Who is responsible for writing the lyrics?
Will: The formula reflects how we actually write and play the songs overall, which is collaboratively. There will be an initial idea and then we'll all build on it. Takes time but I really prefer doing it this way.
Lena: Some of the lyrics start with something Will brings to the table, then I often apply some censorship so we don't end up on a watchlist. Also sometimes I'll start writing something inspired by a direct experience or a book I read.
Sam: Usually someone starts writing lyrics, but is too lazy to finish them and then someone else jumps in.

MRR: So you write your music in a similar way?
Will: Yeah, I think so. And our contributions aren't limited to the instruments we play in the band. For example Lena also plays guitar and has contributed to writing some guitar parts. Sam, when not laying on the practice room floor in a drunken stupor, has come up with some bass ideas as I have for guitar at certain points. And the end result is a based on the decisions of all of us.
Lena: Yeah, it tends to take longer that way instead of one person just relaying their vision, but doing it collaboratively to where everyone has a stake in making the songs seems worthwhile.

MRR: Tell us about living and playing in Oakland, California.
Lena: At this point, everyone's probably tired of complaining about the recent and rapid transformation of the Bay Area, and maybe even tired of being tired of complaining about it, so I'll try to mention instead why we're still here or at least what is still worthwhile about it. But don't get me wrong, Oakland has many problems which have now also been compounded by gentrification which definitely affects my day-to-day existence, but obviously in a much less intense way than it affects the long time residents.

What drew me to this part of the Bay was the developed underground culture and the spaces and dialogues opened up by these alternatives, and definitely the like-minded people I found here. That continues to be true, though maybe the initial excitement has slowly worn-off due to the challenges posed by living here, and seeing friends start to leave as a consequence of the unregulated flow of tech capital blocking people's access to a decent quality of life... It's still a great place to play shows in DIY venues/art spaces, houses, and an array of bars and a small handful of official all-ages venues. There are so many layers to this city. And I feel like here you get the best parts of living in a city and a smaller town combined. And also some of the worst parts of living in a city...

MRR: Does punk suck?
Lena: Sometimes. Obviously since its inception it has been different, and sometimes contradictory, things all at once, and this divergence has only increased in the 21st Century. I think it's important to remember that punk was a reaction to a concrete historical context of crisis, cynicism, neoliberalization, end of politics, etc., which have now only increased in our time. But that's not to say we should just rely on reproducing punk in its original form to oppose the current reality. I think it can and should continue to be a form of artistic expression that evolves against new forms of oppression. And musically, it has to be conscious of the past, but should build on it and not just try to replicate it.
Will: Sometimes I'll answer yes to that but I'm still here after all this time. Evidently I don't think so. As much as I've complained in the past of a schism in my social world between the punk scene and the political scene, the truth is that this distinction is often blurred. Although I haven't witnessed, overall, the punk scene as being as present in social movements as I would like it to be, there are also many, many exceptions to that. And those exceptions are some of my favorite people I've encountered in my life. I do not think punk has any inherently revolutionary characteristics to it. Nor

do I think that it prefigures a better society. But at the same time I don't think it is necessarily supposed to. It's a reaction to this world, not a solution to it.

MRR: What about you, Sam? Does punk suck?
Sam: Probably.

MRR: What keeps you interested?
Lena: I still get inspired by projects, social spaces, and people that are built and come together based on a DIY ethic that makes everything possible and creates the sense that anything is possible. I still think that is one of the most inspiring things about punk, people making things happen and taking back spaces. I agree with Will that subculture won't transform society, but maybe I'm more optimistic in seeing its potential to build an alternative or make some difference in people's lives. As a kid, it was immediately appealing to me because it was an accessible form of political thought that seemed to resonate with what I was already thinking and it was kind of pissed off. And I was kind of pissed off. At a time when I was already questioning the commonsense assumptions of the world around me. I was also a little bored of listening to Nirvana "Smells Like Teen Spirit." Thinking back, some of my first encounters with other cultures and languages was through their punk and rock music, and the DIY punk circuit and the valuable friendships I've forged through it has taken me to various corners of the world that I would have never experienced otherwise. Punk changed my life! So I try to remember that when I get down about it, and try to get excited about new things.
Will: I could go into the many friendships that have come and gone, but they wouldn't have developed at all if punk weren't a place where there is, at least, a minimal shared antagonism to our surroundings. As I said, I don't think it can provide a course for transcending the way things are. But in the absence of a truly threatening and massive movement, punk still carves out a place where the hostility we all feel toward a horrific reality can persist. In that sense it keeps me feeling like myself and keeps me feeling alive.

MRR: Which have been some of your favorite shows you've played so far during your short existence?
Will: There have been a number of really great ones. What immediately comes to mind is playing Varning Festival in Montreal. I had never been there and instantly fell in love with it. We drove all the way from New York and were sleep deprived from the show the night before. I was a little anxious about playing that evening given how out of it I felt, but as soon as we started setting up everything just fell into place so well. The sound person was very solid and helped clear away any stress. So given my mental fatigue I was left with a slightly dreamlike experience with the show. I could see some spikey punks dancing around people singing along to whatever the hell was remotely intelligible from our demo recordings. We were treated very well in Montreal and I recall feeling very honored to play with such great bands at that fest.

Secta from Colombia really stood out. Having not heard them before they played I remember their set was a kick to my teeth. I loved it. Our show with Generacion Suicida at the World Rage Center was where I feel our live playing started to come together. Despite the mud, the asshole with the bowler cap slamming into everybody and that goddamn pillar that stands right in the middle of where the bands play, I just had a blast. Though not wanting to damage the structural integrity of that building, I'd love to have a ceremony where we'd rip out the pillar, light it on fire and curse it to hell.

I think it's important to remember that punk was a reaction to a concrete historical context of crisis, cynicism, neoliberalization, end of politics, etc., which have now only increased in our time.

Lena: I also had a lot of fun at Varning and I don't even particularly care for fests, but Jannick does a great job with that one. Another memorable part of that experience was speaking with and interviewing bands from Cuba for these very pages of *MRR*. Looking back, a lot of our local shows kind of blend together in my memory, but a couple off the top of my head that I had a lot of fun playing were with Rhythm of Cruelty some time last year in downtown Oakland and Kurraka at the all-ages record store venue. Good vibes. We try to make every show fun, regardless of if for example: I have to play a kit that's falling apart, the sound sucks, people look bored, the sound guy is condescending, etc. Sometimes things come together in an extra special way with or without those elements. Looking forward to more show experiences out of town and out of the country in the future.

MRR: What are your plans for the future of Syndicate?
Will: So after inciting a successful insurrection in Ankara we'll likely move to much less modest goals, like a tour of the Northwest at the end of July! Canada will not be spared. We'll be touring with our buddies Kapital and dates/places are available online. Next summer we'll be speeding around Europe in an extremely fast van glued together with a salt extract made of the tears of Marine Le Pen…
Lena: Also, we are stoked to have a full-length record coming out later this year and to have Sabotage doing a European release.

MRR: Do you foresee the end of capitalism in our lifetime?
Lena: OK, I'm gonna give a serious answer, mostly. Well, especially since the '60s and '70s it seems that "capitalism" has in practice come to mean socialism for the rich and competitive free market for the rest and with some gray areas throughout. And the mainstream media has played an increasingly central role in shaping this consensus, to the point where when the state intervenes to save billionaire banks, people think that's acceptable or at least necessary. Neoliberalism has already proven to be a failed experiment in our lifetime, but it benefits the "right" people and so it will continue to reinvent itself, to justify itself and the catastrophic reality. By the end of the 20th Century we were being told that there are no longer any master narratives, which is good because you can work on being "yourself" so to speak and improve your daily experiences, but it's also bad because we lose perspective, the will, and the imagination to transform society. Until people are able or willing to see the big picture, to understand the systemic issues behind individuals who do inhumane things, instead of scapegoating a whole culture, class, etc., people will continue to be duped into thinking their livelihoods and accomplishments are pinned against one another.

But on the other hand, the problem is the current system does generate that need to be individualist and cutthroat. If everyone could take that antagonism and distrust towards people who are more or less in the same boat as you, and direct it towards the economic and political elites and start to see their extravagant prosperity as the inverse function of everyone else's, at the expense of everyone else's well being, then we'd be getting somewhere. What's the answer? I don't know. I'm good at asking questions…In this regard, punk is cool because it's a form of popular (as in accessible) culture that gets young people asking questions. Part of why Occupy and its global precursors set a precedent is because they brought a lot of previously uncritical people into the fold.
Will: Lena beat me to it. I've never been one to think that I'd witness an end to capitalism in my lifetime. That conflict could last centuries for all I know. However, what's given me reason to actively participate in struggles is the idea that we may at least set the tone for a movement that can someday have the capacity to overturn capitalism. And I mean capitalism in its root sense; destroying it means destroying the social and economic relations that define it. Like production existing for exchange rather than use, for example. Clearly there are many obstacles to being able to do this. Everywhere there are longstanding, divisive bigotries as well as deliberate measures employed by capital and its states to subdue and pacify its populations. But the difficulty also has to do with material changes in the composition of the working class. Production is increasingly decentralized and more and more people are completely thrown out of the formal economic relationship of working and owner, meaning that the very subject of whatever narrative of liberation we're talking about is endlessly fragmented. So how do we come together at all? We need a new collective imagination and intelligence. A new sense of oneness, but one that can define its enemies accurately. It can only come from within the struggles of working and oppressed people. In the course of fighting that war, however, we can find the world in which we want to live. Needless to say, I love it when punk plays a part in that. To me it always has in its own way.

MRR: Any last comments?
All: Thanks to the Ministry of Recreational Research for the interview and *Maximum Rocknroll* for running it. Congrats on the 400th issue!

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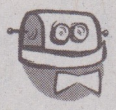

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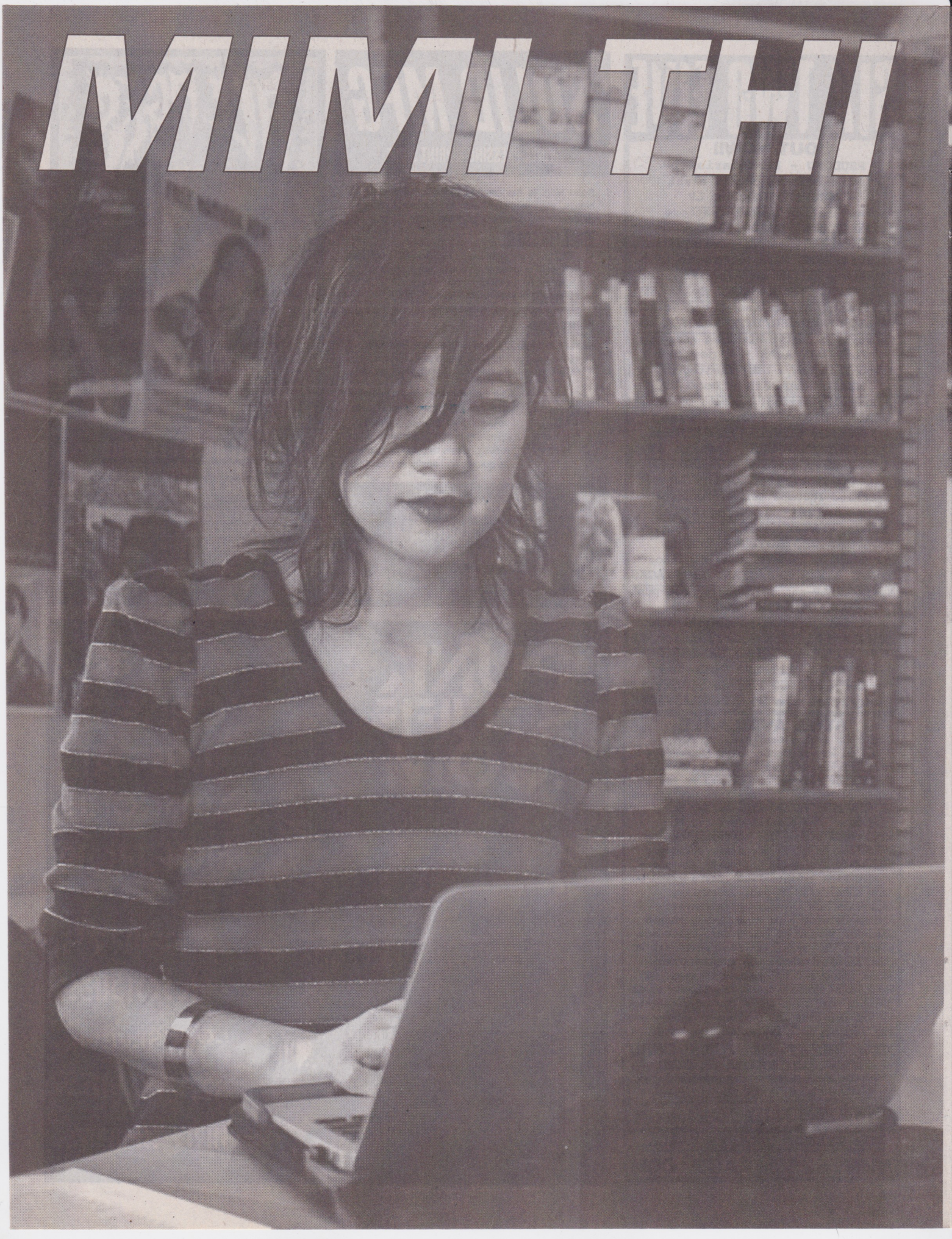


NGUYEN

*Mimi Thi Nguyen is an uncompromising badass who I was lucky enough to meet through Osa Atoe (*Shotgun Seamstress*) when we all toured together on a Race Riot! zine tour in 2012. It was the first time I was around other people who also dedicated their work to intentional space-making around race, punk, imperialism, etc. Mimi was like the brain-twin I'd never had, and it was a gift to meet and tour with her. In this interview we talk about her output since she was a shitworker at* MRR.

Interview and introduction by Anna Vo.

MRR: Tell us how working for *MRR* affected you positively as a punk and academic.

Maximum Rocknroll is my punk door, what Nyky Gomez (Brown Recluse Distro and *Skinned Heart* zine) calls that unique encounter that introduces a person to punk as a possibility. The first issue of *MRR* I read—an older issue in a pile of free magazines from an "alternative" boutique shop called The Black Cat in downtown San Diego—introduced me to the principles of DIY culture-making, as well as the semi-covert wars of Reagan's United States throughout Central America, both of which set me on this path as a punk and a scholar. While in graduate school [at Berkeley], I graded essays while green-taping records for the archive, or chatted with then-coordinators Sean Sullivan and Arwen Curry about critical theory while preparing subscriptions on New Issue Day; being a shitworker kept me going during the long slog through dissertation-writing, gave me something concrete to do with my hands that felt impactful in the world. Since then, it has been immensely gratifying to see *MRR* become a conduit for a vision of punk—full of angry women, creative queers, and smart people of color—that I wanted to see when I first stumbled across the magazine, over two decades ago.

MRR: I feel like your time in *MRR* and the consequent publications that came out of frustration, and thus some of your notoriety, are intertwined. Would you like to speak to that a little bit? Maybe list all the zines you have made, and the years they were made also?

I have had a long and tumultuous history with the magazine; while *MRR* introduced me to the best parts of punk, it also introduced me with the worst as well. The chronology: I was a nineteen year-old punk who found herself the object of racialized misogyny in the pages of *Maximum* after I wrote a letter critical of a columnist whose column one month—it was in a 1994 late summer issue—included some imperial tropes about Asian women possessing exotically novel, horizontal vulva to match our "slanted" eyes. The columnist, one of those white dudes who somehow believed reproducing completely mainstream racist, misogynist discourses within "punk" made him rebellious and cool, then wrote an entire column about how I was a humorless feminist, and thus probably too ugly to fuck despite being exotic. *Maximum* founder Tim Yohannan ruled that this column was "satire" and could be published despite the "no racism, sexism, or homophobia" edict, which was a crushing disappointment to me. I knew Tim, since he was also instrumental to establishing the Epicenter Zone, the all-volunteer, not-for-profit record store and community space I worked at in the Mission. I was twenty years old when the same columnist recorded a song with his pop punk band about wanting to rape me, and fellow Epicenter volunteer Gordon Edgar brought the seven-inch—and news that the record store was refusing to carry it—to a bar on Avenue A (after I had moved to New York City), apologetically.

Because of these events, which were pretty devastating to me as a young punk who really believed that *punk knew better*, I started putting together the compilation zine *Evolution of a Race Riot* (1997) as a group conversation by and for people of color in punk and punk-adjacent scenes to consider race and racism (which I shortened for the second issue, published in 2002, to *Race Riot*). Made up of pieces reprinted from other zines and new contributions, I imagined it as a fuck-you and farewell gesture to the scene that I had loved and then felt I had lost. *Race Riot* was very much born from the desire to see what the scene had not been able to see—not just black and brown punks, but the political and aesthetic economy that renders black and brown punks unseeable, untraceable, because of straightwhiteboy hegemony.

I like to believe that the compilation zine had an impact on *Maximum*, eventually. I don't know if Tim knew what that decision did to me, or that he ever read *Race Riot*, but one of the first coordinators after Tim passed away fired that columnist after yet another tired (and supremely boring) misogynist column, and other coordinators also made it clear to me that this shit would not be dismissed as "satire" at the magazine anymore. Those coordinators' commitment made it possible for me to become a shitworker.

MRR: Can you tell us about your academic work and your first book? And public response to it?

In my scholarship I write most about war and empire, but also about racism (for instance, I wrote an essay about the hoodie after Trayvon Martin), and about feminist theory. (And while war and empire have shaped the course of my life—I was born in Saigon a year before it "fell" to communist forces, and my family fled to the United States as political refugees in those last days—my first radical education about war and empire was in punk, and later in critical theory.) My first book is called *The Gift of Freedom* (based on the dissertation I wrote while green-taping records at *MRR*), which is about how US empire unfolds through this seemingly ironic statement—that through war and interference, the United States grants to other this gift to that racial, colonial others might also know freedom—as a practice of liberal imperial rule, through the imposition of a material but also political debt. The argument came out of the presumption that I, as a refugee, should be "grateful" for the gift of freedom, and that this gratitude should take the form of an enduring debt to the empire that granted it to me—but which then suggests that it's not a gift, but a demand to comply. (I use the example of a parent yelling at their child, "I brought you into this world, and I can take you out of it," to illustrate this point.) Migrants, queers, and people of color, are also often directed to be grateful for basic rights granted by the state—almost always begrudgingly, and after formally *and* informally sanctioned violence—and that such gratitude must manifest as compliance, obedience, and so on. My argument is more or less, "No, that's fucked."

MRR: I am dying to hear more about your second book, *The Promise of Beauty*...Spill the beans!

While writing my first book, I encountered a lot of stories in which the promise of beauty was invoked as an object, a feeling, or a means through which one might endure and live on amid crisis—stories about refugee camps, for example, that hold out the chance encounter with something or someone beautiful (like an unexpected flower in concrete, a wedding under a tent awning, a child's Muslim prayer, whatever) as a reason or a prompt for living on. So I wanted to ask, what does it mean to narrate dangerous, desperate times through the promise of beauty, whether it is imbued with the quality of resilience, the comfort of normalcy, or the possibility of radical hope? And I found it so fascinating that these stories were popular across genres (such as academic, journalistic, fictional, or cinematic portrayals) and across political projects (whether imperial, anticolonial, liberal,

antiassimilationist in nature). The book thus considers the often very distinct political projects that unfold through disputes about the *beauty we deserve*—which is to say, the life—*and also the lives*—worth living.

A good example is gentrification. We can look at the recruitment of art—among other beautiful things—both in response to increasingly depressed economies in former manufacturing-dependent cities as a path toward revitalization, as well as to demographically divided cities in which tech-heavy corporations and real estate developers collaborate with city governments to "art wash" "blighted" neighborhoods. These beautification efforts on behalf of behemoth capital are met with opposing arguments which can and do mobilize another idea about beauty *under threat*—the beauty of the city that once was San Francisco, and is now disappearing at an ever more rapid pace because of these devastating machinations.

sure, but that's what this issue is trying to figure out.

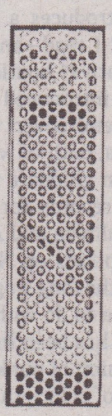
MRR: What do you think about the gap between your public self and your private self? Is there much of a difference?

I rarely published personal stories in my zines when I was younger, and I maintained that gap purposefully. I told stories about my life, of course. But I did not tell them to reflect on how I felt living through it (unless that feeling was rage, because punk). At the time this refusal was loosely informed by two related ideas about storytelling. First, I did not need to know *who I am* to make sense of how I moved through the world because of gender or race, war or empire, which were the constellations that concerned me most. And second, I did not want to narrate my experience as _____ if my experience as _____ might grant others a presumption to know me. It seemed to me then, and still does now, that being public and being cited in those studies. So I've decided on a strict division between my academic self and my punk self—I won't do academic conferences or submit to academic journals about punk. I would never hide the fact that I'm punk, but I'm unwilling to concede that part of my life, which is so important to me, to this professionalizing impulse—transforming this scene and my love for it into some sort of academic capital.

MRR: You've written a little about racism and punk.

I wrote this for the preface of Michelle Gonzalez's memoir *The Spitboy Rules*, which captures something of that moment for me when I began to write about racism and punk: "I was reminded of what I also fought as a young woman of color in the same scene—where racist cool provided camouflage for the same-old discourse of white supremacy in flimsy disguise; where racism (when discussed

evolution of a race riot



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MRR: How is your latest zine coming along? Tell us a little bit about what it's in response to/an analysis of.

I've been working on the latest issue of *Slander* for like, over two years! Most of it is in response to the POC zine tours we were on together in 2012 and 2013. Even though I speak in front of audiences all the time, being on tour was something else, because I was oftentimes talking about that period of time during which I put together those *Race Riots*. While on tour I felt responsible for conveying just how fucked up it was, for just those reasons my friend Yumi asked at one tour event, *What's changed since then, and what hasn't?* I struggled then to be personal, to not just recite the well-worn chronology, but to narrate how it felt to be me at nineteen, despairing, rageful, and impulsive. I felt *responsible* for telling a story about resilience and transformation, maybe even hard-won knowledge.

But even now, twenty years later and having told these stories over and again, I struggle to translate into words what it was for me. Am I wiser now that I am older, and do I have something else to say about that moment that I couldn't say then? I am not vulnerable (or appearing to be vulnerable) is more dangerous for some and less so for others, especially when and where some of us are public and vulnerable to structures and institutions without our meaning to be, because of racism or misogyny, for instance. Why would I wish to be more so? *Fuck that.* So when I did tell stories, I tried to them less as insights about who I am than about the conditions that shaped my movements through the world, and that is throughout all my writing, scholarly or zinely.

Now that I'm older, I find that I have to negotiate the blurring between my "punk" self and my "professional" self. Because of punk studies, and especially studies about race or zines in riot grrrl or punk, the zines I made have become objects of study. And because I never used a pseudonym, it's been weird reckoning with the disjuncture that *what we do is secret*, but it's also on the Internet, and in these institutional archives and academic studies. So, for instance, Golnar Nikpour (former *MRR* coordinator, forever badass) and I did that chapbook with Sarah McCarry and Guillotine Press called *PUNK*, and in it we talk about our issues with punk studies (among other things). And now, that conversation is at all) was understood as something that the state or neo-Nazis committed, rather than something that was *also* with us; and where antiracism too often meant colorblindness. I recall too what it felt like to be at times assumed to be a 'safe' brown one whose brownness goes unremarked (which Michelle describes with bracing candor), and then named the unsafe one who refuses to merely pass as 'just' another punk."

The conditions for the violence that informed *Race Riot* zines haven't changed—it has happened before and since, and bros still need to told to fall the fuck back. But what has changed, maybe, is that the experience of being a freak or a misfit in a scene of freaks and misfits need not be so isolated, isolating. There is a genealogy, a history, of us—and it is possible now to experience it with so many others at once, in a warehouse or a living room, online, in zines from POC distros like Brown Recluse or No Shame, or in memoirs like Alice Bag's *Violence Girl*, or Michelle's *The Spitboy Rule*, or even in *Maximum Rocknroll*.

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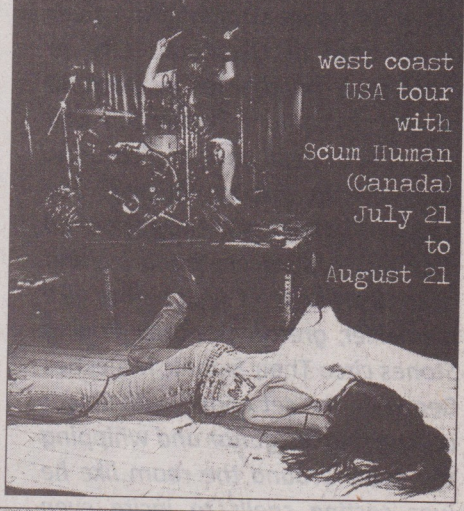

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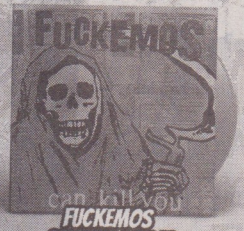

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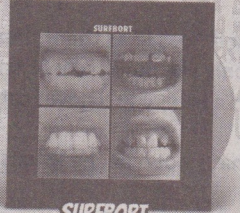

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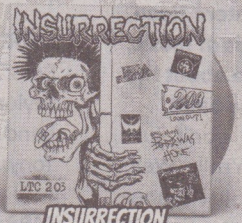

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AMERICAN HATE

Ross and Tim from American Hate drove 24 hours straight from their home base in Oklahoma City to meet their bandmates in Oakland to play Maximum Rocknroll*'s Still Not Quiet... fest back in February. And why do this to yourself? For rock'n'roll, they said. And rock'n'roll they did, a hardcore band inciting chaos like I haven't seen before, like a smellier, greasier, angrier Rolling Stones circa* Their Satanic Majesties Request. *The set ended with Taylor unplugging his guitar and whipping the cable around the room like he was casting spells to incite even more noise from his amp. Before the chaos even felt over, Ross and Tim were back in their car, driving another 24 hours home. It's only fitting that Oklahoma's state motto is "*Labor omnia vincet" ("*Labor conquers all things"). Do it all for rock'n'roll.*

Interview and introduction by Brendan Wells. Photos by Martin Sorrondeguy.

MRR: There are four of you, but there are a lot of different bands. There's American Hate, there's Glow God, there's Cherry Death, and then there's Phantom Head, too—all playing different kinds of music, but still all of you guys. Tell me about the need to play in more than one band.
Tony: Well, it's because we don't just listen to straight up rock'n'roll. Well, actually, we do. [*laughs*] It's just funner to write more than one song at a time. It keeps things fresh. Keeps it fun.
Tim: Some days have a lot of time in them. You gotta fill those days up.

MRR: I think the tape of covers that American Hate did shows how varied your interests are. It's sick that you cover "Citadel" by the Rolling Stones and Neil Young, but you're also doing the Dicks and Chrome. There are influences and interests beyond the straight-ahead genre.
Taylor: We don't necessarily set out to write punk songs, but this chemistry between us four, we kind of have that aggression and it's a good outlet for that, but I think the chemistry itself dictates what we write.
Ross: I do set out to write only punk songs and I'm constantly tricked. [*laughs*]

MRR: Tricked into playing rock songs?
Ross: Yes. But I do my best to make them punk.
Taylor: The thing is we think they are totally fucking punk.

MRR: How did the Rolling Stones come into American Hate?
Tim: The Stones are a punk band for a lot of people.
All: Yeah.

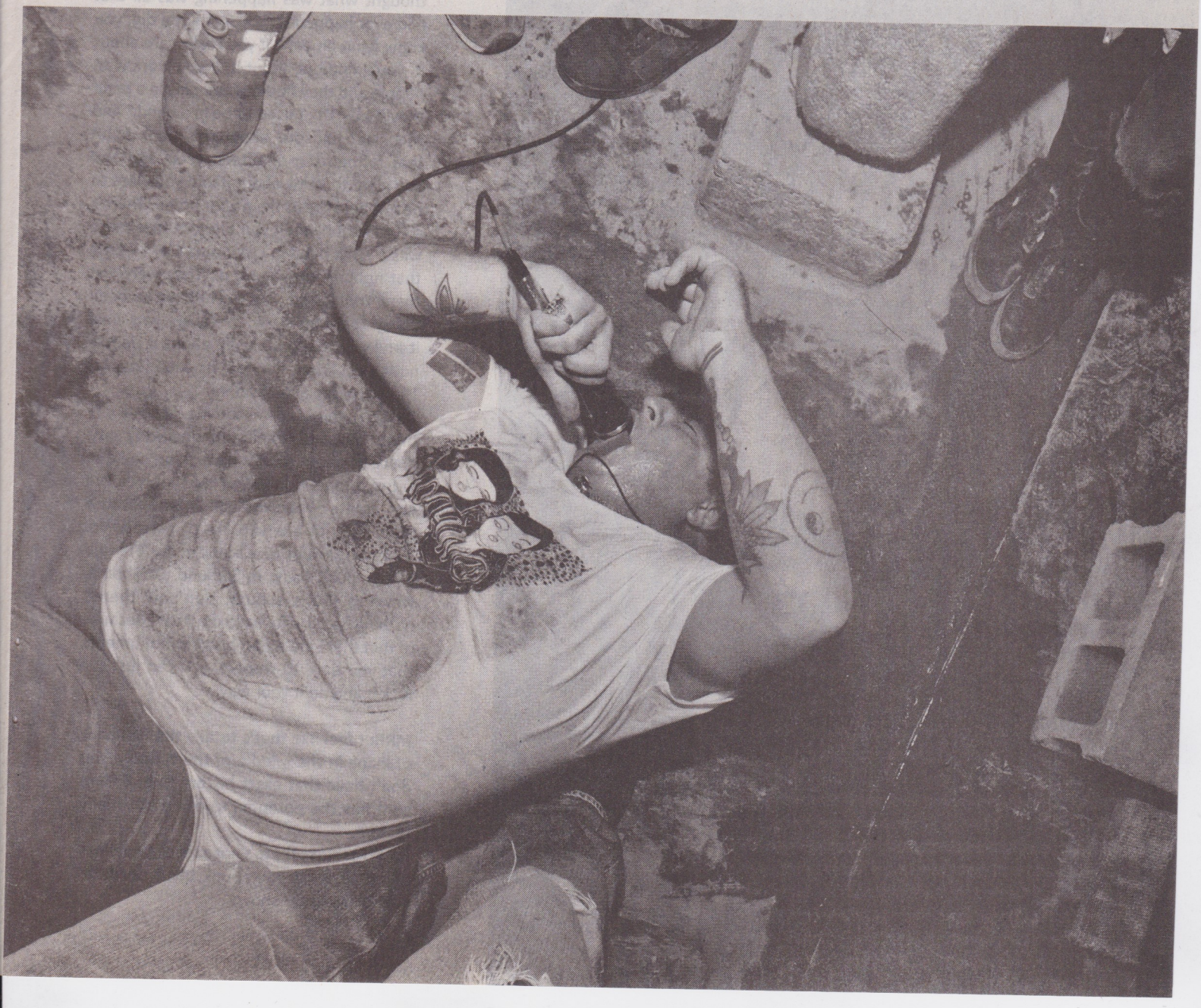
MRR: How are the Rolling Stones a punk band?
Tony: Because they ripped off a million other artists that came before them. [*laughs*]
Ross: They're punk because I like them.

MRR: So if Ross likes them then they're a punk band?
Ross: I only like punk, so by that logic they're a punk band.
Taylor: It's true; you'll never catch Ross not listening to a punk band.
Tony: That's not true, he listens to a lot of Drake.

MRR: Is Drake punk?
Ross: That's up in the air still. [*laughs*] To answer your question, I think everyone has their own musical backgrounds. I think we set out originally to start a hardcore punk band, but I don't

think anyone wanted to be glued to that. Nobody wanted to be like "Let's keep writing these boring songs, lets keep making punk songs because that's what we're supposed to do." It's just a way to push ourselves and let our band grow instead of like becoming stagnant or stale and saying "Let's write the same song over and over again." Everyone in the band is a weirdo and likes this stuff called rock'n'roll except me. I'm cool, I like punk. [*laughs*] Just make sure that gets printed a lot.
Tim: Big letters: Ross Adams likes punk.

MRR: How do you guys feel about Oklahoma right now for punk? I feel like it was something that was never necessarily on the radar, but then with the Everything is Not OK festival, that was the moment where it was really like the Midwest celebrating the Midwest and not needing approval or recognition from the bigger scenes. It feels like since then people know that Oklahoma City is tight and people want to go to Oklahoma City.
Ross: I like Oklahoma City a lot and I think it's because the people involved in the DIY community know it's not always easy and it has to be something you want to do and you have to book shows and you have to make sure you're having band practice if you want to be in a band. It's not like it's going on all the time—there are not shows happening all the time. There are not a lot of people doing stuff to make it happen, but the people who are doing stuff are doing it because they genuinely care and want to enjoy being alive while they're in that city. The community there is really cool and has gone in waves of being nonexistent to thriving and I think right now we're at a point where its going really good and feels good to be there and to be at shows there and people are making cool music.
Taylor: I wasn't there for the first Everything is Not OK last year, but I did hear that after that happened there was this kind of wave of excitement that overtook the city and people started more bands and got really excited for a long period of time to keep doing things.
Ross: And you were planning on moving back to Germany until you hung out in Oklahoma City for a while and decided it was cool and you stayed.



MRR: You lived in Germany for a year or a year and a half on a Fulbright scholarship, right Taylor? And you intended to go back, but you came back to Oklahoma City.
Taylor: Yeah, I borrowed some money to get a ticket back and I got back and I found I was trying not to let myself get back in the groove of the comfortable Oklahoma City lifestyle that I'd had my whole life. I was looking for other challenges, but I actually found them right before me in Oklahoma City and I felt a whole lot better mentally. I had all my good close old friends, even though I have a few really good friends in Berlin, but it just felt like I had something so good here and I couldn't deny it and I had to make the decision. Ross likes to take the credit for making Oklahoma City cool again—
Ross: Only to make Taylor stay. He was gone for a year and I worked all year to make it a place he wanted to live. [*laughs*] Everyone there did it.

MRR: What about growing up in Oklahoma City? I feel like coming up in these kinds of places the only punk scene that you end up knowing about is whatever is going on currently. I think that's kind of a crazy difference I've seen since I moved to San Francisco, which is the kind of place that participated in the first waves of punk. Not only are there still people around from that early scene, but it's also the kind of place that is included in books and documentaries. In smaller cities like in the Midwest we don't come from places that people usually talk about in books like that. How do you find out about the roots of punk in your town?
Taylor: You ask people. I dunno, I only know abut it because I did a little fanzine interview with this guy who washed dishes at my work who used to play in a bunch of bands.

MRR: I feel like you'd have to be really proactive about finding out about this kind of thing.
Ross: It's like that for all of us: you grow up and feel weird and you find punk and you feel okay. I know when I got into it I just thought what was happening was all that had ever happened. You just gotta dig, you know what I mean? If you really care about it, you'll find out about it. If you work with people and they find out you play in a band they'll say "Oh, I used to be in a band," and then you find out about this punk band that formed ten or fifteen years ago and you want to know about it and you want to hear it because its from your home. There's a connection when you find out that there was a punk band in Oklahoma City in 1980 that nobody ever heard of. They were out there trying and that's what we've been doing—playing music because you love it and not really worrying about if people notice us. When they do, its cool. [*laughs*] Thanks, we're actually here.
Taylor: I think we're coming from a city that's not even really an underdog city. We're not even runner-up to someone else in the competition. Being like that, you can just create whatever you want because there are not a whole like of precedents. There was a huge rave scene in the '90s and a huge punk scene in Edmond, Oklahoma, which is like a suburb, but now there's nothing at all leftover from that. Because of that there are no prehistoric monuments that you have to respect, you can just say fuck it and do it your way.

MRR: I feel like that's totally the hallmark of living in the middle of the country. You don't have that exact history to pull from so it has the potential to come out really unique.
Ross: For sure. There's not a set of guidelines as far as what your punk band needs to sound like to get shows.

MRR: Yeah, because that's even a thing. There will be so few bands in town that every band is going to play together and you have to, otherwise there wouldn't even be a scene. If there was a hardcore scene that was so strict that it was only hardcore bands then you'd have a scene with like two bands in it.

Ross: And honestly that was a big positive thing growing up, because I know from my friends who grew up in bigger cities with bigger scenes that they'd have to deal with scene politics to get on shows and to play with the bands they wanted to play with. If you're in Oklahoma and you play in a punk band and a punk band comes through on tour then chances are you get to play with that band. I have friends in bigger cities who would find out I played with a bigger band and they'd say, "How did you play with that band?" and I'd say "I live in Oklahoma and I'm in a punk band. There are three punk bands in this town and we're all playing the show." [*laughs*]

MRR: So the band started with everyone living in Oklahoma City at the time. Tony, didn't you basically move from Denton to do the band?

Tony: Taylor had asked me if I wanted to go on tour with Glow God and I said yeah. I had made plans to move away, possibly to New York. I said no to that after the tour—which was the worst tour ever, but I had a lot of fun. They asked me if I wanted to play and I said why not. I moved in with Taylor very briefly and then moved in with Tim. It was cool to learn how to play more fluently with these guys. There are a lot of fluids between us. [*laughs*] We liked to jam.

Taylor: We started American Hate because there wasn't really another punk band in town—maybe Anti Patterns—and we had just gone on this tour and all these bands were hitting us up for shows in Oklahoma City and we were like "Fuck, we don't have any bands to play these shows."

Tony: They were all hardcore bands.

Taylor: So we started a band that we wanted to sound like Rudimentary Peni and we started jamming and Ross was just like, "I'm in that band."

Ross: No, you called me. You fucking called me.

Tony: You came to a Glow God show and you told me, "We're starting a band together."

Ross: No, because you called me while I was pooping, and I answered the phone and you said, "Hey, we're starting this band, do you want to be the singer? We've got all these shows coming up so we're going to start a band" and I said "Obviously the answer is yes" and then I finished pooping.

Tony: Tim somehow wandered into it in a haze of weed smoke and he was just here. He had a Mark Hoppus bass and we said, "You're in!" [*laughs*]

Tim: Seafoam. [*laughs*]

Taylor: [Then] me and Tony moved away on the same day. Tony moved to Kansas City.

Tony: September 11th, 2014.

MRR: And then at that point was the idea hiatus or just see what happens or what?

Taylor: We were trying to tour Europe. We had the 7" and I had booked this really cool tour that we didn't get to do, unfortunately, where we were going to go through a whole lot of Eastern Europe and Greece and Transylvania. It was going to be cool.

MRR: That is the part of Europe you'd prefer to tour? Why's that?

Taylor: Absolutely. I see this band as a vehicle to see the world and that's a part of the world I've always wanted to see. It's a big world, why tour the US over and over and over when you can maybe get somewhere else and meet new people? That's the dream.

Now we've written some new songs that we like a lot and I can't wait to record them.

MRR: And that's what's going to be the LP?

Taylor: Yeah, on Not Normal, as always and how it always will be. Unconditional.

MRR: So everything you guys have done—the tapes, the 7"—it has all been with Ralph from Not Normal.

Ross: Everything we've done has been on Not Normal. Every single thing. Ralph is really good with deadlines and is really good about getting you stuff right before you need it for tour.

Tony: He's making sure there's not a pixel visible anywhere. There's a keen eye for the artwork. He's very strict—he likes to know what the lyrics are about, what the artwork represents.

Ross: And he's just a good friend. It's cool to work with your friends.

MRR: Is that influenced by any experiences with other bands you've been in and working with labels with people you didn't know, or have you just always stuck with your friends?

Taylor: It's never been about working with a label who we didn't personally know. It's pretty unconditional with Not Normal. An unconditional love.

I want to ask you a question: what do you think of the name American Hate?

MRR: I know you guys have gotten people making assumptions that it's based on nationalism or something like that, which wasn't my first instinct with it. I guess what I'd get out of "American Hate" is that there are a lot of negative aspects to this classic Americana existence. The negativity in the American experience, that there's a lot of underlying negativity.

Taylor: I think that gets really whitewashed. I think there's a special brand of hatred that you can find here. Its super misanthropic and individualistic but at the same time celebrated. I think there's a celebrated arrogance. Like look at the way America celebrates its military.

Tim: We're all very proud of hating things here.

Taylor: And we didn't want to say "We hate the US." I just wanted an objective meditation on the violence that happens every day here. To me it's very unique. Not to try to sound too removed—I

don't think we're too removed from those sorts of things. Nobody is who lives here. I had this feeling it rubbed some people the wrong way and I wanted to know why it did.

MRR: Related to the idea of violence, the performance of the band embraces a lot of what people aren't willing to or don't involve themselves in, these basic instinct of violence or sex or the lawlessness of performance. Watching Taylor play guitar, you shake your ass. There's this story where you were dancing while playing guitar and you're shaking it and you're having eye contact with this guy and you said you felt this connection and you felt "OK, I'm going to kick this guy in the chest because I feel like that's what we have going on right now and that's what we're going to do together." I think maybe it didn't go in a good direction. [*laughs*]

Taylor: It didn't. It was one of the craziest sets we've ever played. It was in Kansas City. Yeah, there were tons of people, and this one guy was huffing a bunch of duster, and I just looked at him and I saw him, like, waving, and I felt wavy too. I was staring at him and I just lightly touched him with my foot in his chest. I turned around and he just totally sucker pushed me and my guitar went flying and everything fell all over the place. I remember feeling fine and feeling cool with it and I put my guitar back on. I just thought yeah, that's just part of the deal, and then I just got livid and so mad at this person. I pushed him back and Tim saw it, threw his bass down, and straight up speared this guy to the wall. Ross is on the ground and people are kicking him and Tony was just jamming on the drums, and then finally it was just over. There was this really negative atmosphere until right when we turned our amps off and then...it was just all good. It was really strange.

MRR: You guys definitely play into that feeling when I see you perform. Ross, you walk around, and you're looking at people in the eye. You're putting your hands on their faces, and this is not the thing that comes from a normal person-to-person interaction or the typical daily respect of personal space. Does that kind of daily existence change when you're making music? Where does this come from?

Ross: Personally for me, the band is like a really big release when we perform. I let a lot of things out that I bottle up in life, you know what I mean? I feel like it's the one time I can feel okay and yell at people and they're looking at me so I'm going to look at them. I kind of get disconnected from myself and my personal identity when we perform and go into this other world. I definitely encroach personal space a lot and a lot of times after the sets I really feel weird about that, but when I'm doing it, it feels like what I should be doing. I've even approached people after the sets who I really feel like I maybe got a little too personal with and I'm always like "Hey, I hope I didn't cross any boundaries, I'm sorry if I was too much." Because I don't know what I'm doing and it just feels like what needs to happen and afterwards I think "Wow, I hit that guy in the face with the microphone, that's probably not a cool thing to do," but the weird thing is that every person I've ever approached about it they've always said "That was great!" I've never had anyone be negative towards it. I don't ever want to hurt anyone, but I think its because for me, I'm uncomfortable in life, in social settings, I'm uncomfortable being around people, I'm constantly trying to put up this wall to not let people know I'm uncomfortable because the thought of that makes me uncomfortable. When I'm playing I feel comfortable, but I feel like its because I'm projecting in a sense, I'm letting this discomfort inside me out and projecting it on the people around me. Somehow it's a coping mechanism.

MRR: I believe you when you say that people aren't against it. I think that makes a lot of sense. Day to day there's so much that you're worried about as far as human interaction—what is appropriate, what am I allowed to do—and then being given this experience where for whatever reason, right now, I'm allowed to forget about that and embrace the most basic feelings. People compare music making to violence and compare it to sex, these other really base human things. I think there's also this thing of wanting human interaction on a physical and personal level that in your day to day you're not going to have without a lot of hang ups not going to stare someone in the eye and scream at them, you're not going to put your hand on them and touch them and actually drop all your hang ups and interact with them in the most basic way, and that's something I want when I see a band. When I see people staring at the ground or looking bored while they play I think, "You're still holding on to your baggage." A wonderful thing about the experience of music and certainly punk in that way especially, is being able to have these experiences.

Ross: That's it. I just let go of everything and that puts me in a place where I feel comfortable getting close to people. I never try to be too physically aggressive to anyone, but it is a form of aggression getting in someone's face, but you're here to see us perform and I want to do that. I want to let it out and I want the people to be a part of that and I want people to feel engaged. That's something that is cool about punk, you don't' just have to be a person in the crowd, you and get engaged with the band and feel like you're part of a moment. If something does happen that you don't like, you can voice that and there can be an open discussion and that's how we move forward, when we're not afraid to talk to each other. I like being a punk singer. [*laughs*] We get in the moment and give it our all. We don't play a lot and we don't play for a very long time so what do we do? I'm usually completely exhausted after our set because I'm in horrible shape and I try too hard. [*laughs*]

MRR: I think that's an important part of it, along with this actual expression of things—you have to try to do it. A lot of people aren't willing to look like they're trying, so I have a huge level of respect for people who actually try, people who are putting something out there rather than the classic "I'm cool, I'm not trying, and you know what, if I fail, I don't care, because I wasn't even trying in the first place."

Ross: The band matters and the stuff I'm yelling, I'm mad. I'm not just yelling, I'm yelling about something, you know? And whatever it is, whatever the song is, I wrote the lyrics for a reason and they're mostly personal to my experience and I try to capture a feeling for that

with the group. I let everyone in the band read my lyrics. The words are meaningful to me, so I couldn't perform them without meaning, and if I wasn't doing that, what's the point? We like to do it and we do it because we want to. We're not going to just stand there. Maybe if they're terrified, they won't know how terrified I am, you know? [*laughs*] If the crowd's scared they won't know I'm scared.

MRR: Are you scared when you're playing?
Ross: Sometimes! [*laughs*] Yeah. Anxious, nervous. Maybe most people are okay with any amount of people just looking at them for twenty minutes, but I think it's awkward. It's a long time to be looked at. And when you're playing smaller shows, like at home, you have that comfort and its just your friends standing around and looking at you for awhile, and that's cool, I'm going to look at them later when they play. We played Not Normal Fest in Chicago and that was the biggest show we had played at that point of being a band. We were playing with all these bands we loved who are really good and I was terrified to play for them. I remember this huge crowd of people who had never seen us before and we're playing this fest for this guy who puts out our records...It's just a weird thing to have a room full of people give you their attention for an amount of time, especially when you're just acting like a giant goon baby. [*laughs*]

MRR: That is your stage style. [*laughs*] Giant goon baby. That is something interesting about you talking about playing in your hometown, because I feel more uncomfortable playing in front of the people I do know, especially singing for a band and looking at somebody while singing and knowing that there is this entire previous relationship. It makes it difficult for me.
Ross: That's something I personally had to work on. In a lot of my first bands, I was the singer who had their back to the crowd and looked at the band the whole time. I realized that about myself when I saw other bands do the same thing and I wouldn't enjoy watching those bands. I had to make the conscious effort and that just turned into me staring at people. [*laughs*]

MRR: Any last words?
Ross: Punk is fun 2016.

americanhate.bandcamp.com

SILENT ERA

Interview and introduction by Jesska Hughes. Photos provided by Michelle Hill and Carlos Garcia. Illustration by Michelle Hill.

Silent Era are a band from Oakland, CA whose members contribute to the punk scene in so many different ways and have for such a long span of time, that to mention only their current shitworker status would not do them justice. They do not just shitwork for Maximum. *They shitwork for punk worldwide. As a person who is not great at describing a band's sound, I'm going to try to avoid saying things like Silent Era are "politically charged punks" or have "driving guitars" or something, when what I really want to say is that they're "politically conscious punks" and that I like to go "driving with them places." Greg Harvester plays drums, Julia Booz plays bass, Matt Badenhop plays guitar, and Michelle Hill sings. Their band is inclusive and powerful.*

MRR: This is the shitwork issue. What is your shitworker resume?

Julia: I do zine reviews. For a while I was the book review editor. I proofread and I sometimes file records. Sometimes I go to new issue day.

Michelle: I do layouts and try to go to new issue day.

Matt: I review records and demos and do the radio show.

Greg: I do demo reviews, record reviews, and the radio show. I'm on the board. I file records.

Julia: The first time I ever hung out with Greg was at *MRR*. I was picking up my first zines to review for the first time, in September of 2002.

MRR: So you've been satelliting the same scene for a long time. Have you all collaborated before on other projects?

Matt: I played a benefit show for Greg ten years ago, but I didn't know him then.

Greg: I've lived with Matt.

Michelle: I filled in on guitar for Matt's band the New Flesh for a European tour. Greg and I have been in like fifteen bands.

Greg: Just in like the past three years.

Michelle: One time we were in four bands at the same time.

MRR: Greg and Julia, didn't you do an interview together for BAD-SMUT?

Julia: All I did for that interview was think of the questions and then Greg did all of the hard work. Interfaced more, and Michelle laid it out.

Michelle: Silent Era is how [Matt and I] started hanging out.

Matt: We had never hung out, that's true.

Julia: It was my idea to get Michelle to be the singer for this band, and that was laying the groundwork for me to be in a band with Michelle. I wasn't in the band yet but I knew I needed to be at some point, and I was going to somehow make that happen.

Michelle: Witch!!

MRR: How much of your "life stuff" is reflected in your songs? How do you bring that stuff into your music world?

Matt: Playing music for me—I feel like the rest of my life does inform it in a sense, because it's this thing I need to be doing in order to be fulfilled. The energy I'm putting into it is not informed by what I do, but it's definitely a release and a need.

MRR: Does having a platform make you feel responsible for having important lyrics, making sure that you say something to all the people that are listening?

Michelle: This is the first band I've been in where I'm not playing an instrument, so I have the opportunity to put all my energy into just writing vocal melodies and textures, and lyrics.

MRR: Your words get to be your instrument?

Michelle: Yeah. I'd say the act of singing itself is a crucial release for me; the physical vibrations, the resonances themselves, are soothing, healing, invigorating. Everything that goes into the lyrics

is "life stuff." The lyrics are definitely feminist, with elements that are visual, political, emotional, astronomical. They come from feeling overwhelmed and frustrated, silenced, empowered, asleep and awake. The words are definitely important to *me*, but all art and personal expression is interpreted by whatever audience. Once it's written and out in the world, it has a life of its own.
Matt: You'll come up with melodies first and it'll change.
Michelle: The melody always comes before the lyrics. I often feel as though the melodies write themselves. The mood will be haunting, or resolved, or wild, and that will plant the seed of the lyrical content.

MRR: Do you feel like that's why a lot of hardcore bands have political or angry lyrics?
Greg: I think people are just pissed.
Julia: I think people who *are* pissed *are* drawn to hardcore naturally. I think that's why I'm interested in it. We're not a hardcore band, but we have hardcore influences. I don't feel like the first thing about this band is that it's pissed, but it's in there. Michelle definitely has lyrics that are very political and strong. Observations and accusations that make it an angry band that doesn't sound that angry. Except sometimes, more so now than in the earlier recordings.
Matt: There's a commanding presence to the vocals. They're right up front. They don't come off pissed the way somebody screaming does but I think that people notice it.

MRR: How would you describe your sound to people not familiar with your music?
Matt: Fast and melodic, vocal and guitar driven.
Julia: People have compared us to Dan, Sofa Head, and Post Regiment.
Matt: After our first show a friend ran up to me and asked if I liked Post Regiment and Kafka Prosess, which are two of my favorite bands. I don't think we sound like those bands, but I was chuffed that someone heard that in our sound. We don't write with any particular sound in mind, and even though influences are evident, I like to think our sound is unique. A major influence for me is Norwegian guitarist Børre Løvik.

MRR: What kind of stuff do you guys do other than just playing in a band together? Non punk-sanctioned things.
Julia: I make jewelry, I'm a cat enthusiast.
Matt: I don't really do anything else other than punk. It's the only thing that I care about. I make ice cream. I've been to a few protests.

MRR: Those waffle cones are art, Matt. You should go to more protests.
Matt: I know I really should. Slacktivism. [*to Julia*] Wait, how many protests have you been to?
Julia: I don't know, in the high teens.
Matt: That's more than me.
Julia: How many riots have you been to? I have been to three.
Matt: I have not been to any riots.
Julia: ...yet.
Matt: Our whole interview, instead of this whole Q&A thing, should just be a list of statistics.

MRR: 85% of people love statistics.
Michelle: 75% of people believe statistics are real.

MRR: Greg, what kinds of things are you into?
Greg: I go to protests, which aren't *specifically* punk. I am a social worker in San Francisco. I do a lot of other things that are *actually* punk. I am also a cat enthusiast, I write a zine, and I like travelling to big wide-open spaces.

MRR: Michelle, what about you?
Michelle: What do I do... [*contemplative silence*]

MRR: You do so much stuff.
Julia: One time for Halloween, Michelle knit an entire sock puppet costume, and then she played guitar in it in a Dead Milk(wo)men cover band.

MRR: I played bass in that band and she had to teach me the bass lines, so she did front all of it.
Michelle: [*to interviewer*] Thank you for being patient about that. Let's see, I am a designer, cat enthusiast, I like food projects, I knit and sew, I repurpose, I hate waste, I—
Matt: —sing karaoke.
Michelle: I *love* karaoke, I play a lot of instruments and try to learn new ones, I like being outside, I like plants and science and the ocean...I think this list is just becoming an online dating profile.
Matt: This whole interview, instead of Q&A, we'll make online dating profiles.
Michelle: The reader would be forced to "swipe left" though, because they're turning the page.
Matt: What does *that* mean?
Greg: It's rejecting.
Michelle: I think that we're all rejected.

MRR: Greg, you said that protests are not inherently punk, what's up with that?
Greg: It's true, people from all walks of life go to protests and they're not specifically punk-oriented activities. But there are a lot of punks and anarchists that go to them.
Matt: Well it's true when you go to a protest, at least around here, there are punks there, but it's mostly not punks, at least at the most recent protests. None of the Frisco Five are punks, are they? There's two rappers though...
Greg: The Frisco Five [were at the time of this interview] on a hunger strike at the SF Mission Police Station. They're trying to get the Chief of Police fired and it's incredible. None of them are punks.
Julia: Punks do like to go to things and pretend they invented them.
Matt: That's true. Punks are poseurs!

MRR: What places do you picture people listening to your music?
Matt: I always think of it more in a live setting.
Greg: I do most of the mail order for the band. When people order our tape, they'll send me their address and I'll look up a street image to get an idea of where people are listening to our music. It's mostly a house out in the middle of nowhere out in the middle of a field and I'm like "that's cool."

MRR: I love this admission.
Michelle: Greg, you're becoming Skynet.

MRR: "This song goes out to John Connor!"
Matt: We appeal to the isolated…the Remote Outposts.
Greg: I picture people living in really remote areas listening to our music.

MRR: What is the best part about touring together with this band?
Greg: I think this is the most easy-going band I've toured with in a really, really long time. I've been on tours where someone in the band kicks out a window in the van because they're mad, or someone's hiding drugs.
Michelle: I've toured with some emotionally abusive people.
Matt: I want to play in a band with people that communicate well and that I feel a connection with on a broader level, and I think we're all in that right now. We all know what each other are trying to do.
Michelle: The friendship is laid out, the groundwork is there.
Matt: If somebody's mad they talk about something instead of kick out a window. We might still kick out a window…
Michelle: But the way we would do it is you'd be like, "Michelle, I'm going to kick out this window." And we would all say, "how do we all feel about this?" And then we'd say, "Matt, it's a great idea, we support you," and then you would kick that window out and we would be like "Yeeeeeaah."
Matt: There would be a talking stick.
Greg: Fuck that.
Michelle: Greg needs the talking stick. I was on tour once with a band who went through five vehicles in four days. The first one got stolen and stripped, there was no gear in it thankfully. The second one we borrowed from a friend and, as we were driving to the practice space to load our equipment, we got pulled over for expired registration. The cops searched it without permission and towed it. So then I called my sister and we borrowed her truck and drove to Portland. At the show we played that night, there was a guy who had a van that he was using to haul recycling

and we jokingly asked if we could take his van on tour and he said yes. So we left my sister's truck in Portland with a friend who returned it to the Bay the next week. We took this new van and made it as far as Kansas where the water pump died, and I had to buy us a van in Salinas, which lasted us the rest of tour. The night I bought it the alternator gave out and took the battery with it, so the first thing we had to do was try to figure out how to replace it, but none of us had any money. Our drummer walked into an auto supply shop off the highway and just stole a truck battery, walked it into the parking lot, realized it was too big for our van—like it was going to fit but the connectors weren't right—and he MacGuyvered the thing in there. It took him like an hour in the parking lot of the shop we'd just lifted it from. It's not like we grabbed the battery and ran, we like, took our time. So then we got a free tow to the next town where we slept in the parking lot overnight, replaced the alternator when the store opened and continued on the tour. Sometimes...you should listen when the Universe is telling you to stop. At the end of the tour, the drummer stayed in Minneapolis, made some money and hitched a ride back to Salinas, fixed the pump on van #4 and returned it to the guy in Portland.

Matt: Wow at least he got it back. One tour I did we slashed the van tires and left it in west Texas, it was gone. I had another tour end once where we were borrowing a van. We had one more show, we were on the highway and our tire shredded, so we pulled into a gas station. We had to change this fucked up tire and we were like, "we're at the gas station, we might as well get gas." So we pulled up to the pump and opened the fuel door and the filler neck was gone; it was just a hole straight to the ground. We looked under and the whole fuel line had gotten ripped out when the tire shredded. It tore everything out with it and it was back on the highway somewhere. So we pumped gas into the pipe underneath the van, took a dirty sock and stuffed it in there and put duct tape around it, cancelled the last show, and drove all the way home. We returned the van and the owner never made us pay for anything.

Michelle: The moral of all of these stories is that tour is amazing, everyone should do it, it keeps you resilient, and it makes you resourceful.

MRR: Yes! That book *Tour Sucks*?! What a crock!

Matt: Tour rules.

Julia: One time I was at SXSW and our bass player put antifreeze into our oil line because he was worried that we hadn't checked our oil...and we had a mechanic *in* the band! He changed the oil while really hungover and it was a hundred something degrees 'cause we were in Austin in the summer.

Greg: I was driving through Georgia on tour in the middle of the night and the van just stopped working so we pulled over and the alternator belt had snapped. We fixed it with a shoestring and chewing gum and it got us 30 miles to the next actual town.

Matt: See, *now* if we ran into that we'd be like "We gotta call AAA. There's no way we can fix this, we're in way over our heads."

Michelle: Necessity is the mother of figure it the fuck out.

Julia: My dad drove us to a show once. After we had to make a new band rule: "No boyfriends, no girlfriends, no parents."

MRR: I never would have thought to make that rule but it definitely seems like it should be up there in lights.

Matt: Well, it's mostly like, you shouldn't have to say it…but then it turns out you do… sometimes. [*to Julia*] Did he do the thing on the highway?

Julia: Yes. My dad gets mad when people drive too close behind him and he'll slow down sometimes to a complete stop on the freeway, if people don't back up or change lanes. Yes, it has caused accidents. Yeah, he's a psycho. [*into recorder*] Dad, you're psycho!

Michelle: Julia, that's a recorder.

Matt: "If this were your dad what would you say to him?" Anyone else who's been to therapy experience that? I've had that happen. "I am not going to scream at the pillow, dude. Sorry."

MRR: Yeah, they did not make me do that.

Matt: One time I was having therapy in this room where kid therapy happened and there was this little sandbox and this shelf with all these little figurines, dinosaurs and G. I. Joes, little cars, all kinds of crap. My therapist suggested, like, "pick some stuff off the shelf and put 'em in the sandbox." And I'm like, I can't do this, this is so stupid.

MRR: "Dinosaur means you're crazy! We can't help this kid."

Matt: Right! And so I just did it, I put some in there and he was like "Well, why'd you put that one in there? Why is it facing that way?" I'm like "I don't know man, I just put them in there!" But then I was trying to do it, just to see…It was crazy.

Michelle: How old were you?

Matt: This was like two years ago. I was an adult!

MRR: He tried to toy therapy you as an adult??

Michelle: I thought you were like six.

Matt: No! That was the first time I've ever been to therapy, just a few years ago. It was in San Francisco. He was a great therapist, but *that* was weird. Something I never thought I would do.

Julia: Oh to be a fly on the wall...Oh to be a turd in that sandbox.

Michelle: I would love to go to therapy. The idea of online dating sounds scary enough to me though; the idea of finding a therapist sounds fucking impossible.

[Listening to records, "Stuart" by The Dead Milkmen comes on]

Matt: This song was one of the theme songs to the Signal Lost tour I went on and we did a radio show at *Maximum* and I wanted to play it but they didn't have it. They had purged it apparently.

Michelle: *[gasp]*

Matt: It wasn't "punk."

MRR: It came back around.

Matt: It might be back now, because I think people would agree it's punk now. I remember Tim purged a Big Boys record because it didn't have enough punk on it.

Greg: The Minutemen, too.

Julia: I wonder if Tim would purge Silent Era.

Matt: I kind of doubt it. I think if we had—

Greg: —a funk part.

Julia: If we had a reggae song...

Matt: I think with lots of bands, reggae gets a pass for some reason.

Julia: Because of the skins.

MRR: If we actually want to know what Tim Yo would do we should probably ask him.

Matt: We did a séance, me and Mike and Lydia and Ashley, at the *Maximum* house and Lydia talked to Tim Yo.

Michelle: That house is haunted as shit. He's definitely there, ready to pick up the phone.

Matt: One of the questions Lydia asked Tim was who stole the records—remember there were some thefts years ago? Some letters and stuff happened and it didn't spell out a name. We were trying to decipher it somehow but we never could, it was kind of like, bullshit. She also asked him, "Am I doing a good job?" and he was like, "Yes."

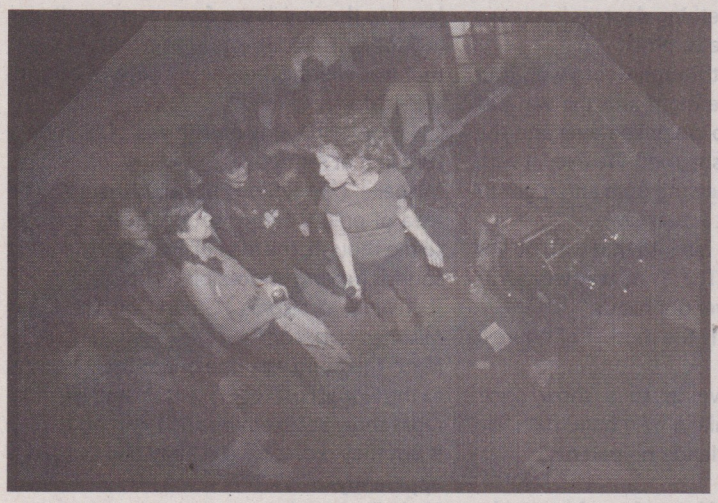
All: Aaaawwwwwww.

MRR: If you had any advice for who you're going to be in the future...what do you want to tell your future selves?

Michelle: Thirteen-year-old me thinks that thirty-three-year-old me is pretty cool. I feel like forty-eight-year-old me will be like "Yeeeeeaah."

MRR: Really tired?

Matt: It's like one of those job interview questions.



Michelle: "Where do you see yourself in five years?" "Hopefully at this dead end job that I'm interviewing for."

MRR: Work to live, don't live to work. Speaking of shitwork, is *Maximum Rocknroll* relevant?

Matt: I guess that's the thing that's always made *Maximum* controversial.

Julia: Elitist.

Matt: Yeah, because it is elitist! It's submission based, what do you want to see?

Michelle: It's only elitist if people care about the content and feel that the opinions expressed hold weight.

Matt: If you can back it up…

Michelle: I mean if you give a shit, as a reader, as a person who's not involved. If you don't care about it then what's published is just a bunch of empty opinions. What is punk?!!? Oh my god you guys, does punk suck?!!?!

Matt: Wait…is punk *dead*??! I think it might be dead! My whole life is punk. I'm not interested in anything else, only punk. What does that *mean*?!! What is all this *stuff* in my house?!!?

Greg: When there are things that come into *Maximum* that expand the perimeters of punk I'm like, "Yeah, cool, we're reviewing this." There are bands where the drummer is playing a hardcore beat but then everybody else in the band is going off and freaking out and I'm like, "Yeah, this is crazy and awesome. This is some semblance of punk." Other times I'm like, "This sounds like the Sugarcubes. I'm gonna give it to Michelle."

Michelle: Thank you.

MRR: There's the argument that *Maximum* shouldn't exist anymore, that the purpose of *Maximum Rocknroll* was to introduce and connect people to things that were hard to find, or to people that were part of your world that maybe you wouldn't know about otherwise. But everything is so accessible now, at a certain point all *MRR* tells you is what's cool. When you have a magazine that tells you what's cool, it divides the people instead of bringing the punks together.

Julia: I think it still introduces people.

Matt: It's different now than it was when I was getting into punk when I was younger because the internet does have so much fucking information. You can find videos of bands from Finland, Japan and US hardcore bands from the early '80s and be like, "I'm gonna do THIS." Also, we live in the Bay Area where we have all these resources to punk, and we know all these punks. There's fuckin' five shows to choose from every night, and sometimes we don't even go to any.

Michelle: Our market is flooded.

Greg: We're not going to any shows tonight and there's a fest going on.

Matt: Iconoclast is playing down the street and we're all like, "Eh." Because whatever, who gives a fuck, right? When I was fourteen and living in the suburbs of Dallas, I could find Lagwagon and Subhumans CDs, and me and my friends got *Maximum* at Borders. It did open up this whole thing. The internet can take the place of that for a lot of people now, but *Maximum* is still available at chain stores in small towns or suburbs and people might pick it up because it looks fucking cool.

Michelle: As long as the information gets to the people…

MRR: I come from Oklahoma. It was the same thing. I found out about stuff from *Maximum*.

Matt: I've never been anti-*Maximum* at all, but when I moved to California I was talking shit about what *Maximum* covers, the classic complaint, because it wasn't covering certain things that I was interested in and it was covering things that I considered to be just boring trendy things, and all it takes is the argument, "Then why don't you contribute something?"

Michelle: [to Matt] You're the one that got me to do layouts because we had that one *Maximum* issue in the van on that New Flesh tour and I was like, "dear goddess, these fuckin' layouts are unbelievably bad." And you were like, "You know what you're saying, don't you. You're saying that you could do them better and therefore it's your responsibility to step up and do them better." And I was like, "Shit. Yup."

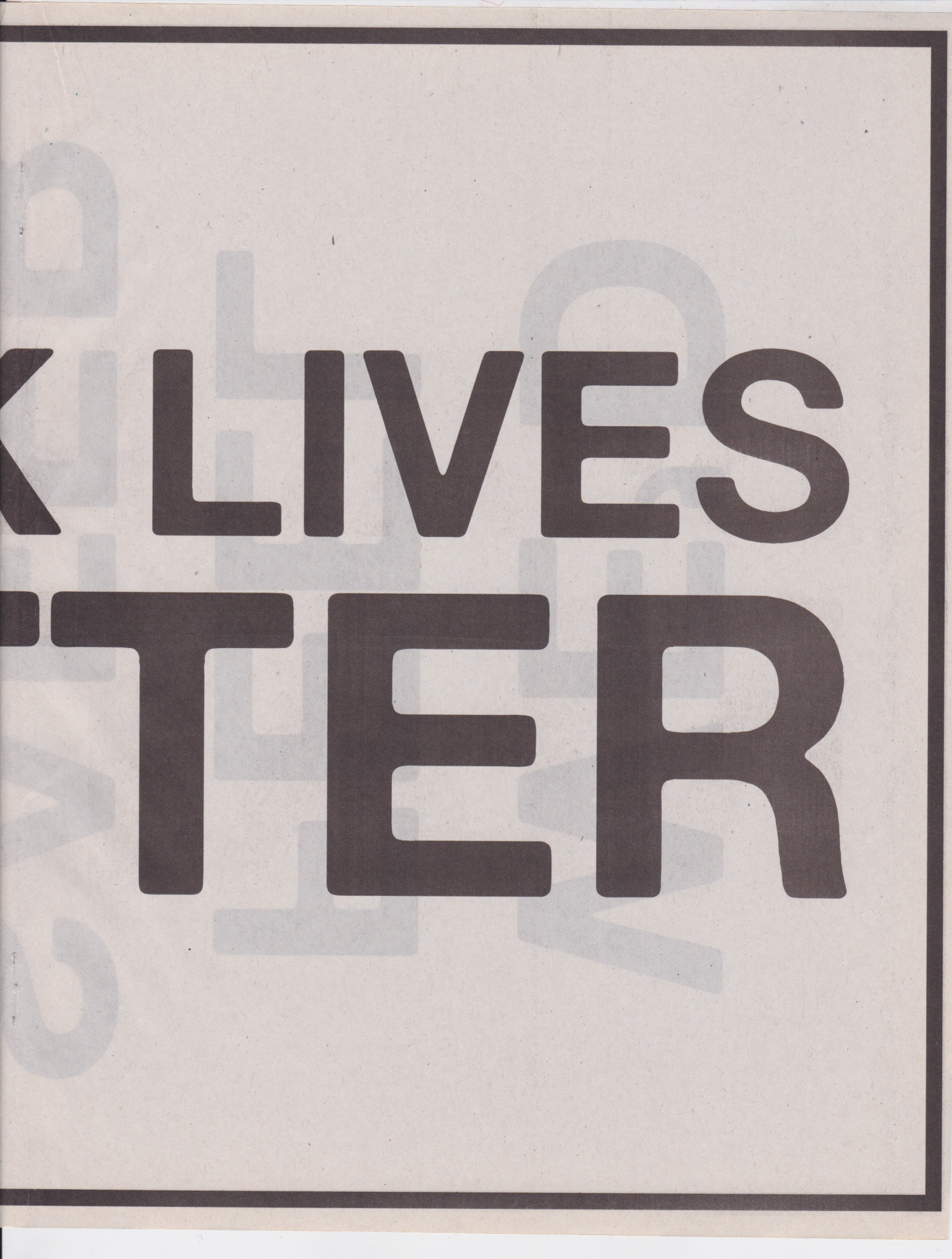
Matt: And that's what happened to me too, someone was like, "Well, why don't you start reviewing stuff?" And I started reviewing stuff. I have a lot to say about music.

Michelle: Be the content you want to read. Be the layout you want to see.

silenterabayarea.bandcamp.com

SAFER
WITHOUT
POLICE

BLACK
MAT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WE'D FEEL SAFER

SCREAM QUEENS

Interview and introduction by E. Conner. Photos provided by Loco.

Scream Queens performs the closest thing I've ever experienced to the friendship mythos of late night records, oversharing zines, and perfect looks that I'd always hoped I'd find in punk. The real kind. The hard kind. Every Wednesday on Berkeley Liberation Radio you can tune in live to their ripping dripping playlists full of shit you never heard and then wait for them to unleash. They scream on air. They cry on air. They are drunk and messy and loud on air.

As individuals I'm proud and fucking lucky to call them friends. As a collective entity I'm content with being only another humble worshipper at sanctuary.

The saturation of the rhetorical tool of friendship is foundational to modern punk identity. Certainly it plays a huge role aesthetically as lyrical fodder and some kinds of visual representations. Its value is also intrinsically connected to production. The social networks through which we make space and media are connected through meaningful personal relationships. The idea of fiercely dedicated misfits creating a sound and a look so as to signify some kind of shared values can be heartbreakingly false sometimes. When you look at communities of people who tout friendship as an organizing value and yet are represented as homogenized as the rest of shit society you are struck with the kind of questions we ask when we begin to see the value in this world torn apart.

In her heretical text Let's Spit on Hegel *Carla Lonzi wrote about the contradictions of the subculture of 70's Italian Marxism "One should not forget that "Family and safety" is a fascist slogan." Scream Queens, in those few hours demands no safety and renders the family socially impotent. We are allowed to see a precarious glimpse of what real love must feel like.*

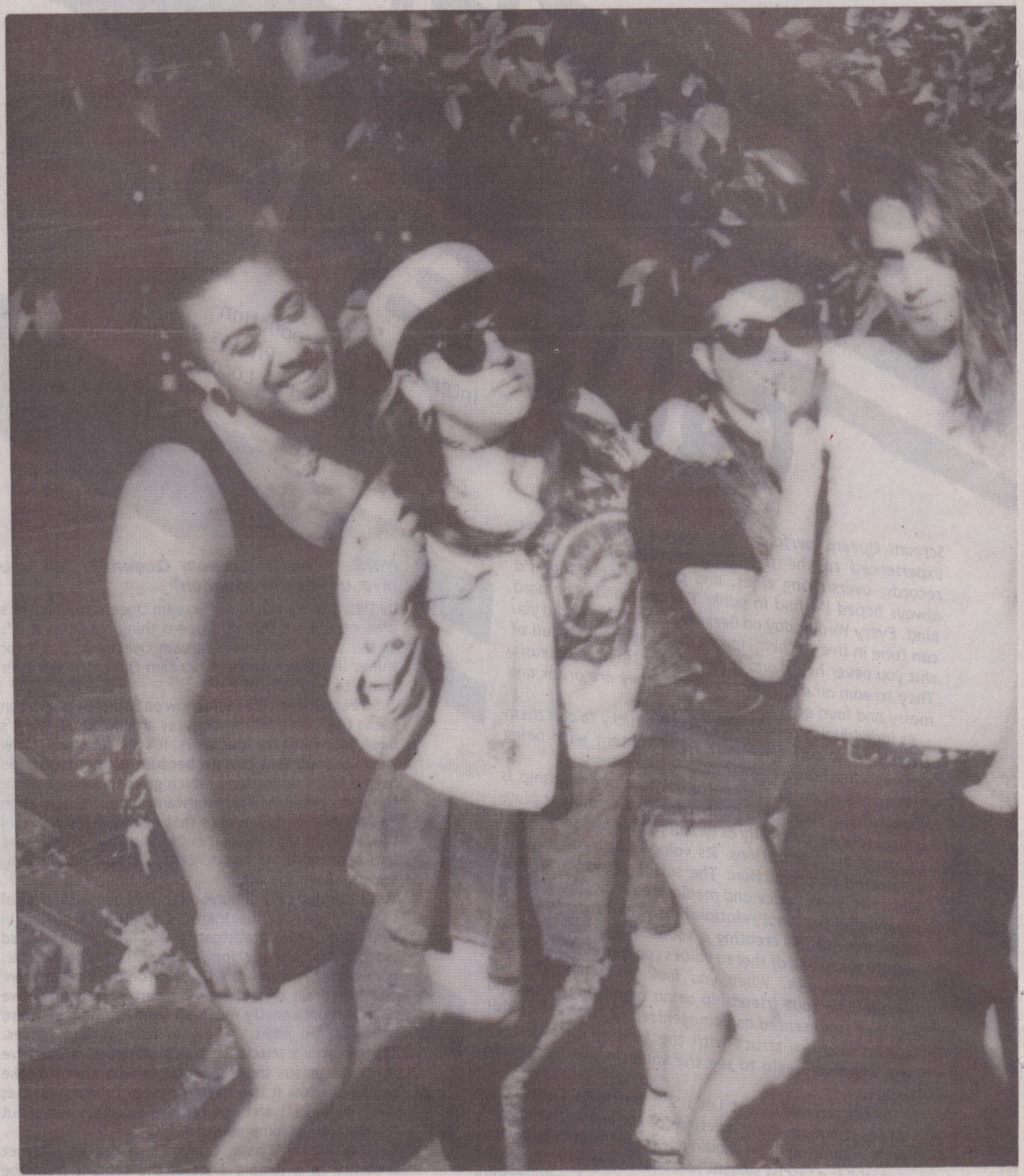
MRR: What is Scream Queens? Can you give us an introduction?

DJ Ditz Bitch: I would say Scream Queens is whoever's present when a Scream Queens thing happens. If it's at the show, that's who Scream Queens is, if it's for things like this interview—Scream Queens is whoever wants to be a part of it.

Scream Queens is a radio show on Berkeley Liberation Radio that airs every Wednesday around 10:00 PM—it's been happening for four years. It's a pirate radio show which is important to note because it's not restricted by the FCC's limitations, which gives us infinite space to say or do and be whatever want. Berkeley Liberation Radio's guidelines are ones that I go by in my personal life, which is that the content of the show needs to be anti-oppressive: no homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, down the list.

DJ Crazy Bitch: It's a punk radio program and physical space to discuss the material realities of living in whitecisheterocapitalistpatriarchy as a marginalized person. It's a space for participants to be critical, honest, and real. Along with being on the airwaves, we also broadcast online and via smartphone app, so we have listeners pretty much all over listening at weird hours of the night, calling in from various places. There's also a Mixcloud, which serves as an archive for our previous shows, so people who aren't awake or can't access it live have a chance to listen to it as well. We have it archived back to a certain point, but it's not totally comprehensive.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Scream Queens also has an internet presence as a Tumblr. A lot of the content from the show gets channeled through that to whoever is paying attention to us.



MRR: What is a typical Scream Queens show like from beginning to end?

DJ Ditz Bitch: I have a lot of anxiety about being on air so I'm always drunk and I'm always late and the technology—all the equipment is sort of dishevelled every time I'm there so it takes me a while to get it going, being dishevelled myself. We start with a playlist then we'll have a segment, then we'll answer people's advice questions about relationships, and whatever else they need. Sometimes it's heavy, sometimes it's funny. We'll maybe play more music, then get into what Lizard Bitch does which is "Ignorant Hour" and it's kind of like when everyone can unwind and if we take it even further, there's karaoke.

DJ Crazy Bitch: That's the dark 3:00 AM shit.

DJ Ditz Bitch: It's the witching hour.

DJ Crazy Bitch: Some people do listen to our karaoke, y'all are the real motherfuckers. We usually have guest DJs or we just do two different sets by Scream Queens members, depending on who wants to do music that week. Because you know, digging for music is kind of a process, something the shitworkers and readers of *Maximum Rocknroll* are quite familiar with. You're always on the lookout and have to always keep that eye open.

DJ Ditz Bitch: What'd you call it? Sonic excavators?

DJ Crazy Bitch: Yeah, you're a sonic excavator.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Definitely that.

DJ Crazy Bitch: I feel like being at *MRR* and being at Scream Queens I've definitely turned into a sonic excavator, where I'm just digging for music all day.

DJ Ditz Bitch: And we influence each other's playlists a lot. I mean, you [White Bitch] have taken a lot of the Scream Queens playlists and taken them to dance parties.

DJ White Bitch: Yeah, that's been really cool. I feel like Scream Queens has introduced me to totally different music. It was actually a party happening at this house (the Menage) a few years ago, it was my birthday and Ditz Bitch was like "oh you should have a darkwave party" and at the time I was like what's darkwave? That party was the starting point of my developing music taste, through the show too. Italo disco and darkwave make people dance differently, so it's always fun to play those playlists at parties.

DJ Crazy Bitch: The segments we do are usually guests we invite onto the show who we recognize as doing liberatory work/cultural output, we invite them onto the show and have them talk about their work, sometimes read their work if they're a writer. Perform live in the studio.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Musicians, or as any type of performer, we've had someone do a performative monologue.

DJ Crazy Bitch: So we have all these different guests that explore themes around systemic oppression, the dominant culture, critiques; we usually have them perform their work, discuss their work and be open to questions from the group. The group is always changing, it's more than just a core group of people who come in, sometimes it's just people who come in because they're in town or they're just friends of friends and they wanna hang out, so there's always new people coming. And we invite everyone to participate so everyone gets to ask questions, everyone gets to participate in the discussion.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Scream Queens is a place to refine our analysis of the world. It's a learning/unlearning spot, it's a healing spot for sure, it's a place to have serious conversations but also a party at the same time. Trying to meld those worlds together is difficult but we've been able to get it to happen. I want people to have something to rely on weekly: hear new music, be read to, receive healthy validation, have a designated time do whatever helps release their tensions.

DJ Crazy Bitch: As someone who doesn't drink, I am prone to getting really uncomfortable at parties where I just hide with my phone or homework, but I feel really comfortable going to Scream Queens because I can party and I can also be real and no one is gonna think I'm a Crazy Bitch (even though that's my DJ name, haha) cause I'm gonna come at someone all intense like "Yo, fuck this shit, when am I going to be ethereal sentient cosmic dust?" We all come into the studio with a similar mindset, ready—or not—to have some real conversation about current issues, power structures, personal and political dilemmas and work through it. Sometimes, it's unresolved and we'll figure it out later. We don't have all the answers right now, we don't expect ourselves to always have an answer, and we accept that realizing and dismantling oppressive power structures is an ongoing process and conversation. I feel like there's been a lot of refinement in our thought processes and show structure in the last couple of years, where we felt comfortable enough to branch out into a lot of different mediums, like the Mixcloud, and so forth.

MRR: What are you looking for when you invite people to the show?

DJ Ditz Bitch: I feel like who I like having there is whoever needs it, you know? It seems like, if they come for the first time—the show's been really established now, so we know how to manage the energy or whatever. When people come and I see that they're absorbing the—how do you say goodness?

DJ Crazy Bitch: Just like the kind of space we create—we're definitely creating a space that doesn't perpetually exist. What we create is very fleeting and it can only exist in that moment. I feel like a lot of people don't get to experience that because they live in a life that's so wrapped up in the everyday reality of white-cis-hetero patriarchy, where they really don't get a break from that, and if anything, this is a break. In terms of non-segment guests, I bring people who need a fucking break. People have been really grateful to come into this space, they have said things like "I really needed this. I need this space. I'm not freaking out in here, I'm actually having a good time and I can be myself and I can be chill." I feel like a lot of the times, as marginalized people, especially people who are facing intersecting marginalized identities, we live our lives backed into the corner 24/7. We are in constant survival mode with not many outlets to turn it off. It's stressful and mentally exhausting. If anything, this is a time for us to be able let our guard down and be ourselves.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Balancing reaction and reflection. We need to listen to each other and hold each other's complexities—people who seek to destroy us don't give a fuck what we say because they don't have to care—they choose not to complicate their power positions, so most of us feel unheard or silenced. We need overcome this idea that our experiences need to be "convincing" to be taken seriously. Our pain is our truth and that needs to be enough, Scream Queens is to affirm that it's enough, without the need for institutional backup. The people we bring on intentionally for segments—that starts with any kind of relationship you have that requires honesty and trust. If I have you coming on the show, I'm putting my trust in you to uphold these stringent values. Stringent, in the sense of them being necessary and important to survive against bullshit. Anyone who's doing honest work that I have an emotional relationship with, I like to have on the show.

DJ White Bitch: It's always nice to see people's work that might just be on the internet and then you see it in person, people are reading their zines, really taking something from one medium to another, doing it live and it's an amazing thing to see on a weekly basis.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We also have people that come to the show that give us perspectives of struggles that we're not so aware of a lot of the times, or have a lot of knowledge of, or just are not getting enough recognition. With the radio they are able to reach a bigger audience.

DJ White Bitch: It's also cool when people come and read unfinished works, like Van read part of her book and Wendy Trevino read part of her chapbook before it was published. It's cool to see people bringing those ideas and their projects and putting it out into the world via Scream Queens.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Like during the pregnancy. Before the baby happens.

MRR: Can you list off people that were on the show that you're excited about or would want other people to know about?

DJ Ditz Bitch: Incarcerated friends/comrades Niara and Jennifer Gann have had presence through their letters. Wendy Trevino, The Bedroom Witch, Van Dell, Gus Allis, Jett Amos (alias name, not sure if they wanna be named), DJ Shawna Shante, the *MRR* boss queen Grace Ambrose herself, gay necromancer Neve, my favorite crab E. Conner, Pvblic Bath, Jane Harms, Words of Resistance, Jackie Wang, Ragana, Korm Clounty, perfect angel Shnz...there are so many more and I feel like a shithead for not being able to give the full list but these were most of the individuals/groups from the past year that we've had on. Also, there's a comprehensive list of all the bands we've played on the show, all categorized into different genres, on our Tumblr.

DJ Crazy Bitch: When I'm looking for music, I'm usually scouring everything that's come out in the last couple of months from people of color, women, queer, trans people; people who are saying relevant shit vocally or sonically. When I do my playlists, I try to do all my favorite genres of music made by people who fall on the spectrum of these identities and fluctuate between noise, dancey synth pop, and punk. I like to DJ music that has a punk aesthetic but is not traditionally punk. People have such stringent ideas of punk and I personally am against that. If someone crazy alienated bitch is making some weird and unlistenable music, some queerdo screaming for 20 minutes over a skillsaw and a synth hook, I'm gonna play it on Scream Queens.

DJ Ditz Bitch: I take the playlists really seriously. I have this self-imposed thing where each playlist needs to be 45 minutes because eventually I wanna get all the playlists on 90-minute tapes for the future, that's why it's the rule. I put all my playlists through what I call the "Ricky Test," where I make Ricky listen to the playlist and make sure everything sounds right going into each other. It's kind of like an exquisite corpse, where the combination of songs create a larger structure or theme. I can start with twee and end in full-blown industrial in the most beautiful mutation.

DJ Crazy Bitch: You should tell everyone who Ricky is, because *MRR* probably doesn't know.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Ricky is my boyfriend.

MRR: That's gonna be one of the pull quotes: "Ricky is my boyfriend."

DJ Ditz Bitch: Also another thing about the bands is that they're all made up of women and queers. Also, very much of the intention of making playlists is to have as many people of color within those bands. People forget that shit a lot.

MRR: This year when there was that weekend of big hardcore shows in New York recently, there were a bunch of people on the internet complaining about how there were basically no women in the lineup and then it was kinda weird 'cause someone was like, oh but they did a really good job representing people of color, and it was this weird schism in talking about these things, like simultaneously, or as though one happening forgives the other not happening or something like that. So, I mean, I feel like it can create a lot of rifts and schisms socially but also internally for people who maybe inhabit those actual intersections of identity. You know, not to use the word "intersectional" flippantly, but you know, that stuff. This isn't a question I have, just thinking about it. There aren't a lot of places that actually deal with both those things at the same time in punk.

DJ Crazy Bitch: People like to pit each other against each other. They believe that someone always has to lose for you to win. We are taught that you can't have both when the very concept of a binary is false, and that's the opposite of what we're trying to do at Scream Queens. We're trying to have the hard and nuanced conversations here. Making room for the people who you can't easily define. For multiple truths. Really we're just trying to be the most no chill bitches.

DJ Ditz Bitch: And learning how not to compromise for the worst. Like, doing Scream Queens the compromises feel positive. It's in terms of how to respect each other more or how to communicate better with each other, those are the compromises we're making as opposed to soul-crushing shit we have to do in the real world, like coerced roles into capitalism or figuring out ways to present a comprehensible identity that won't get you killed or psychically devoured.

DJ Crazy Bitch: I feel like a lot of the times in political organizations or states of affinity I've participated in, it's often felt like everyone's just out for themselves and can't really see or have outside perspectives, they are unable to truly listen to people and empathize and get on their level. They don't want to, they don't care, they want your liberation as long as it means they are still in power. It doesn't work that way, it can't! I feel like this is, of any place I've ever been, this is the place where I don't have to worry about that because there is trust and genuineness in our relationships to each other.

DJ Ditz Bitch: It's not easy. It's definitely just fully friendship maintenance work. It's not that it happened just by default because we have unifying points in our identities, cuz usually you'd think that's how that goes down, but a lot of time (in my experience) projects like that fail because of that like, misperception of how we're united by [insert blank]. It's actually that we recognize the differences between each other that's brought us closer, as opposed to relying on similarities.

DJ Crazy Bitch: And we empathize with each other to a point where I don't think a lot of people venture to. I genuinely care for and love these people. I would do anything for these people and they'd do the same for me and I don't have any doubts in that, because we're constantly reminding each other about that and constantly having gritty, uncomfortable conversations with each other, all the time, doing the emotional labor to make that happen, to make us stronger as a group.

MRR: When I listen to Scream Queens, it really does feel like that. Like you're listening in on a slumber party or something. It just does sound and feel like close friends talking and then..

DJ Ditz Bitch: Building weapons-

DJ White Bitch: It's all been building for years now. It definitely didn't start out the way it is now. We didn't know what we were doing and we were a lot messier than we are these days.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Still messy.

MRR: And that kinda carries over to the advice that you give, the same kind of thoughtful advice that friends give each other. Do you wanna talk the advice portion of the show at all?

DJ Ditz Bitch: We had some segments last summer/fall where I was dealing

with heavy shit and using radio time to process it and claw out of my fucking hysteria. Despite having done funny gay sex advice segments in the past, this was when it felt most real for me—talking about how to confront patriarchy in relationship dynamics (and other things that create skewed power relations within intimacy)—then it turned into leaving toxic/abusive relationships and what it is to support friends through those situations. We made room for these conversations and people started to hear it and started sending us their own questions about that stuff. We have different experiences with our queerness, race, and sexuality within the collective/guests and we have a lot of perspectives to offer. We answer the questions carefully, humorously, and honestly.

DJ White Bitch: I'm alway so impressed by people's advice. I feel like it's a big bonding point for people in the room because we do have different experiences and it's so personal. It's always really cool to listen to people's advice and I think it's worth tuning in for.

DJ Crazy Bitch: It started off unsolicited, through anonymous messages to the blog, and then it just kinda snowballed to every week we get two or three of them that we answer. Also—hello, if you're reading this please send questions a couple days in advance.

DJ Ditz Bitch: We usually get them the day of.

DJ Crazy Bitch: Sometimes they're really heavy and sometimes people don't give us the whole context, and I understand you're being anonymous and you're not trying to out yourself, but sometimes we give three different kinds of advice because we don't know the specifics and we have to make a lot of assumptions. Personally, I need to know specific context so I can give specific advice. I think I can say this for a lot of people in Scream Queens as well.

DJ Ditz Bitch: A lot of questions are also about desirability, people struggling with that, and things like that need a lot of context in terms of identity. The only places we can answer from are from our own experiences with that type of shit, you know?

MRR: Not only does Scream Queens have the archive online, the Tumblr, and some future projects happening, also y'all did some interview zines over the years. What facilitated the shift from Scream Queens the radio show to Scream Queens interview zine series?

DJ Ditz Bitch: Between me and DJ Hating Ass Bitch, we had this idea—being like we want to put cement into these words and make sure that artists' efforts and states of being don't just fade away. There were so many brilliant/inspiring things people were doing and saying and I felt like I couldn't just let it float off, I needed to memorialize or historicize it. We're constantly being erased and spoken for, we need to document and record our own narratives.

DJ White Bitch: And some of those first bands aren't around anymore and so it really did preserve a moment in time.

DJ Ditz Bitch: It's proof.

DJ White Bitch: Like the music scene in Oakland has changed so much since that time.

DJ Crazy Bitch: And people of color, queer and trans people have directly credited our past work of spotlighting these music projects, focusing on this music and uplifting and centering these people that need to be known, with inspiring them to do their own.

DJ Ditz Bitch: It was a way of showing gratitude. It was less about it just being a zine but just like, I care so much about your work that I'll spend hours transcribing the interview, writing a bio, putting images together. Just like, this is some of the most important shit in the world to me and you should know that it's important.

MRR: On that note, I hear that Scream Queens is moving towards a hopefully bigger print project.

DJ Ditz Bitch: The idea started with a dream I had on X-mas morning 2015, working in this room with a bunch of my friends and there were clippings of shit everywhere and we were all making this magazine happen and it had this really vividly inspiring feeling. Then there was this man in the dream, some man I used to staff at this infoship with—

DJ Crazy Bitch: Boring. *[laughs]*

DJ Ditz Bitch: And he was trying to tell us what to do and we were fighting with him, like "you're just here because you have the resources we need to do this" and blah blah blah. Anyways, the dream was some manifestation of how I felt about watching men (specifically white/straight/cis) do all these projects that really are just wastes of paper and time—

DJ Crazy Bitch: Yeah, men put a lot of trash into the world.

MRR: Pull quote!

DJ Ditz Bitch: —being like, there's so much we can do without them, but they control a lot of the resources, printing, distribution, all sorts of shit. Something I had to learn the hard way was that these men create covert dependencies on them for these resources, so that even if people find them to be problematic/shitty, we still have to neutralize ourselves in order ask the men to produce our materials. It's a pretty horrifying dynamic, and the men get to have their names stamped onto people's projects simply because they facilitated the production, and that gives them the social capital they need to continue being shitty, domineering human beings.

DJ Crazy Bitch: And that's another conversation that we have too, as Scream Queens, that so many people uphold systemic oppression within their own communities because they're microcosms of the greater dominant culture. Men in various positions of power hold the resources to all the things, to all the machines—the means of production, you know whatever. But we've got this, we can book your shows, we can spotlight your band, we can do all this, why not have a fucking zine?

DJ Ditz Bitch: Like a full-blown magazine. I have this thing called "trans girl urgency"—knowing that my existence is scorned always has me wary of death, but the positive side of my terror is that it catalyzes my ambition to create as much as I can while I'm still fucking here. It was also this thing about like—I was hanging out with my friend Carolina, who's gonna be featured in the first issue, and they were saying like how we're all in this mo(ve)ment and we won't really know it until the future when we look back on this and see—there are so many people who are doing such cool shit around me, I just wanna take a thread and connect everything together. The magazine is a collection of geniuses that we know and that's really the extent of it in my head.

Also, I was inspired by *MRR* itself. I asked Grace (we love you) questions about "what is punk", like what can be featured in *MRR*, and I felt that there were too many limitations to it. There's a lot of people who are vaguely punk, sprung from punk, marginalized within punk, who don't fit *MRR*'s criteria who should have this spotlight.

DJ Crazy Bitch: Yeah, and we decided to have the types of things we want on the show in print so people can look at the drawings people do, people can actually read the poems, people can actually look at the zines, just have a different way. Listening to something is not always accessible, people learn

in different ways, people need information in different ways as well. This is another way to put information out there for people to understand and absorb.

DJ Ditz Bitch: And we have so much talent within us too, DJ White Bitch takes awesome pictures—we're starting to understand how we are our own resources.

DJ White Bitch: I built a darkroom this year and that was huge, like finally I have this resource to do the thing I love and I don't have to depend on a school or someone else for it, it's just there. Cuz it sucks, I feel like also going back to relationships and breakups and all that, when you break up with someone because they're toxic for you and you lose all these resources. Dealing with that and going beyond it, being like how can I create for myself? It takes a lot of energy to create resources for yourself, but it's so worth it.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We all have different skills, in publishing, writing, photography, art, graphic design, etc. We're also gonna have music. We have comps coming out as well. It's gonna be on bandcamp. And we have people making music just for our comp. It's another way for us to expand into being able to bring forth everyone, everything, ideas, people, cultural output in the world in all one place.

MRR: You're talking about the accessibility and stuff, which is cool, but a lot of people say that print is not that accessible in 2016.

DJ Ditz Bitch: We're gonna have PDFs online. Regarding cultural output, I had a conversation with a friend about what it means to put shit out into the world—how to work towards reducing harm. The content is gonna be carefully examined for what it could manifest outside of itself. Above all, it's to justify people's dissent and bring them calm seeing shit that reflects the nuances of their struggles that are normally dismissed in a world that caters to patriarchy and whiteness.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We do this project in so many ways that there is a way where almost everyone can access it. This is an ongoing process. It's a way for people to connect to other people, like I said, all this comes out of—for me personally, comes out of alienation. In this moment, in these spaces, I don't feel alienated. If anything, this is building a greater thing and making our ties with each other much stronger.

MRR: When is Scream Queens magazine gonna be in our greedy little hands?

DJ Crazy Bitch: As this interview is being conducted, we're in the final editing stages, and then we're gonna be in the design stages, then we're gonna be in the print stages.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Probably by the time this interview is published. I'm like astounded by how difficult this actually is. Like I'm used to cut and paste bullshit, that's how I've been making zines since I was eighteen—learning how to do formatting on a computer was something I stayed away from because I'm a baby about learning programs, but I'm stoked that I'm learning so much. Especially from Crazy Bitch, who is a former coordinator of *MRR*, they have a lot of knowledge to give us. It's a little far ahead and we need to close in the different levels of experience we have.

DJ Crazy Bitch: I've been making zines for sixteen years now. In both digital and analog forms. I pretty much taught myself everything and props to *MRR* for teaching me about the digital publishing process. In a way, it's been really cool to not have to be keeping myself up until 4:00 AM putting all this shit together in my room. Now I have this crew of people I'm working on something with. It feels great to do that, as hard as it is for our schedules to allow us to be in the same room at the same time.

DJ Ditz Bitch: It's a new dynamic that's always gonna have its challenges, but above all we're friends, we're not making a magazine just to take a shit in the world, we're doing it because we wanna support each other in what our abilities and desires are.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We're not doing this just because we can, we're doing this because it's needed. There's not enough spaces in the world being carved out for these discussions and themes.

MRR: Can you give us a little verbal preview of the new magazine?

DJ Crazy Bitch: We have artists, poets, musical projects, zinesters, reviews, interviews, editorial pieces, artwork—a really awesome artist is doing our cover. It's gonna hopefully be risographed and xeroxed and also available in PDF.

DJ Ditz Bitch: Also a collage of Erica Botz. Erica Botz forever.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We just did a visual memorial for our friend who passed this year, who was also featured in *MRR* a couple of issues ago. It's nice to have another little reminder of her.

MRR: Are there any final things you wanna throw out there?

DJ Ditz Bitch: I wish you wrote a column for the mag.

DJ Crazy Bitch: E. Conner for *MRR* prez. You gotta get on that board of directors.

DJ Ditz Bitch: As much as I'm embarrassed of myself and doubt myself—I'm gonna give thanks to myself if that's OK. I don't wanna blow smoke up my ass but thank myself that I've been able to toil through my insecurities to keep the flame under the show lit. My hope is that as Scream Queens goes on I'll feel more confident in myself, that my opinions and ideas aren't stupid, like what I'm doing is important—that's still hard to grasp even after everything we've said. It's what the world puts against me all the time. I'm still trying to get over this self-deceiving shit trying to understand my worth through men or like, gain value within white people's standards / expectations—I replaced that useless labor by putting all my love and care into this magazine / radio show and the friends who came along from this. Also big thank you to DJ Hating Ass Bitch for putting together benefits to keep the station going, also for being my wing bitch from day one, keeping the show / my hectic ass together.

DJ Crazy Bitch: I just wanna thank everybody in this group, because as a crazy, alienated, freak bitch, if I didn't meet everybody here in the East Bay, I would have moved away again. I would have been like "peace, punk is boring, I'm out!" you know? I feel like finding everybody here really grounded me and also, I feel like it made me stronger in a way. I'm getting this chance to be fucking free cuz I have all these bad bitches behind me all the time. They have my back and aren't afraid to be real with me. It's really nice having that and I know not everyone has the privilege to have that because for a long time I didn't. I just wish that hopefully people reading this will be able to be inspired to create and further these spaces in their own communities.

DJ Ditz Bitch: And get in touch with us too. We love that. If you feel like you need to reach out to us, please do.

DJ Crazy Bitch: We're here for you always.

mixcloud.com/screamxqueens
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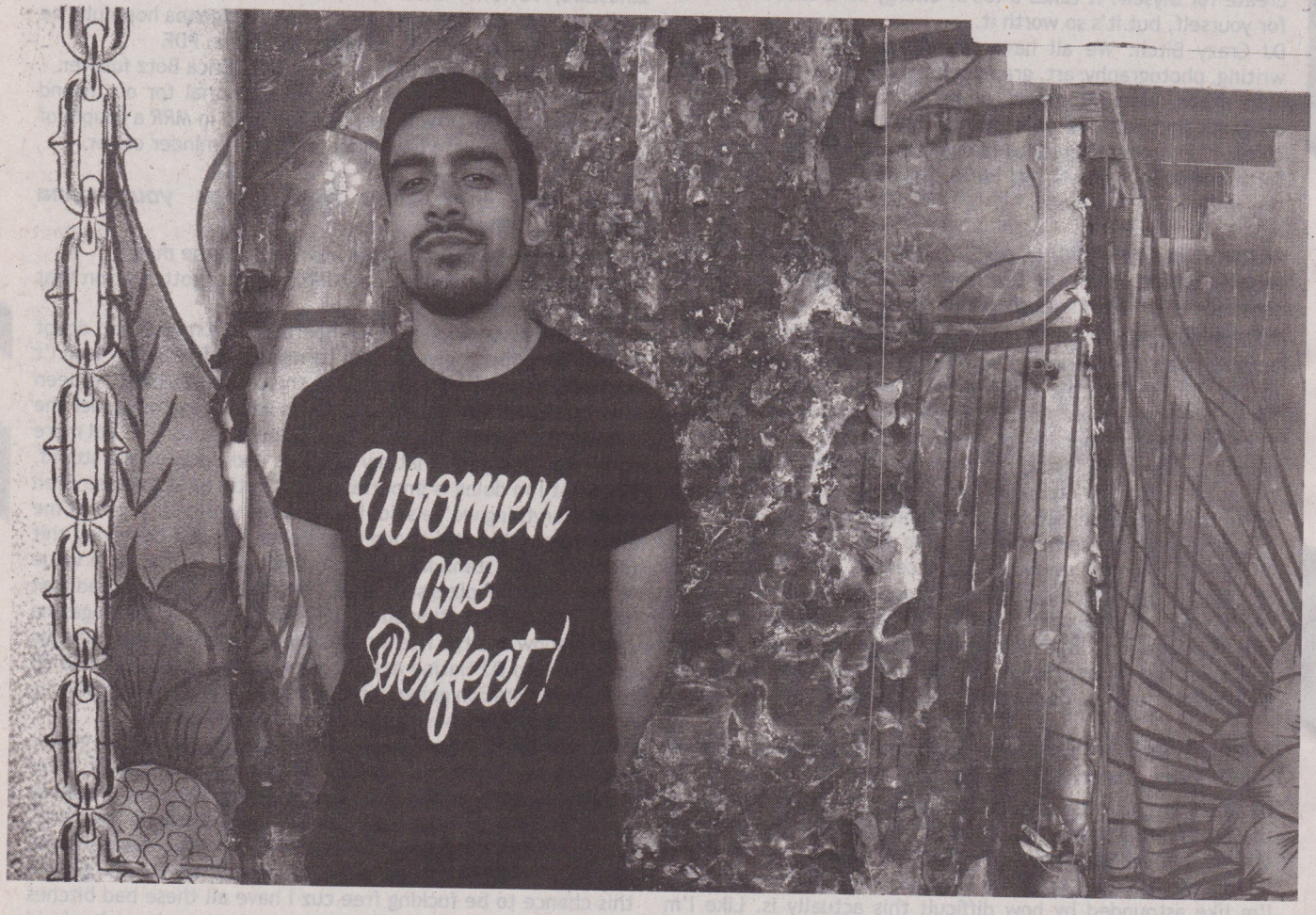
OSCAR GUTIERREZ

I met Oscar Gutierrez when he first moved to San Francisco for school while I was coordinating MRR. *He quickly became one of the most active shitworkers, which proved to be just a sliver of what he was doing. In addition to the various contributions he has made to the mag, Oscar has been active in the southeast L.A. punk scene for many years, organizing shows, making zines, and beyond, all while being an active force in the various communities to which he belongs. In this interview, Oscar talks to us about journalism, how knowledge is perceived, POC narratives, and always, always being dedicated to fucking shit up.*

Interview and introduction by Mariam Bastani.



MRR: Introduce yourself.
My name is Oscar Gutierrez. I'm queer, chicano and southeast Los Angeles born and raised, more specifically Huntington Park. I do a lot of different stuff, mainly journalism / storytelling work. I am a journalist, editor, but I'm also an organizer in a lot of different spaces...and I like punk.

MRR: What a beautiful combination! You have a lot of things going on. Let's start with *Xpress Magazine*.
Xpress is a San Francisco-based magazine, concentrating on lifestyle and culture, which encompasses a lot of different things. I was formerly a copy editor under the direction of a very brutal editor-in-chief. It was...an experience. I [then became] the editor-in-chief. [*Xpress*] is more focused on the humanistic aspect and the idea of what makes San Francisco. In the past we have covered stories around gentrification, we have interviewed parents of people who have been murdered by the police; we do a wide range of stories. Now and then we talk about music, places, food.

One of the things about coming into these positions that are really high and mighty is that often we are so lost in the idea of "Oh shit, I've never done this before and I don't know how to do it." But we *have* done this before and we know exactly how to do it. For me, in terms of managing a staff, hiring people, firing people, I realized that I have been doing this for a really long time. I've been talking with communities, I've been handling a lot of shit. We do it all the time with our families, we do it with our friends (except the firing part, unless you're telling someone to fuck off), we do it with a lot of different spaces, so that's important. I myself, but also a lot of people, specifically folks of color and low-income folks, have been doing it forever.

MRR: Why do you think it's hard for people to recognize that they have done this work before?
Many times people have devalued our work so there comes a point where you start believing it. Kinda how racism works *[laughs]* but I think oftentimes we are told so often that we are not good enough and this comes not only from people in power. For me, growing up in a Mexican, Catholic household I was never really good enough and I think a lot of folks of color can say the same. A lot of the work I was producing didn't even look good enough for me. Often when I am producing work when I am in positions I am "not supposed to be in," I get scared of doing the work.

I have been talking a lot about this thing called Imposter Syndrome. It's specifically used a lot in academia, in grad school, and I have seen this in my undergraduate schooling, where people say "I'm not good enough for this," so they start believing it and start thinking of all these situations where they think "holy shit, I'm not supposed to be here." Imposter Syndrome isn't only applicable to academics, but applicable to a lot of situations, specifically in terms positions we feel that we often don't deserve or shouldn't be part of. You can link it to a lot of issues especially for folks of color and white supremacy—uses of power that we are so often under the scrutiny of.

MRR: Specifically as POC, we are always navigating our own paths to self-awareness. How hard was it for you to arrive at this point where you're like, "fuck it, I'm going to do this job"? Do you vacillate?
It took me a really long time. I think it starts as early as me doing a lot of organizing when I was in southeast L.A. I was doing environmental justice organizing with a non-profit and I was doing stuff with punk. I was organizing shows, talking to bands, and making zines. It's significant to recognize those two things because at one point I was doing a lot of shit, a lot of work with the non-profit organization, but I didn't even consider the punk part as work, right? I was doing legit shit with other people, but it was never valued in that sense. I was doing all this work when I was in high school, but I never even thought of applying to college.

I come from a household that is really poor. My mom continues to be homeless and that is very significant in the ways that I've built up pride to do things. When I started doing work within the university, I was heavily depressed, I had a lot of mental health issues and I still do. Even thinking that I was good enough to do shit that is productive, but also being valued was really difficult for me. I came in to study journalism and while I was doing that I was coming into experiences that were super fucked up.

I recall this moment when I was in my first journalism class. We were talking about a community in Chicago, Little Village. Earlier on I had visited Little Village because there are a lot of folks of color and environmental racism there and I was part of a national network at the time that was making connections across the country with other communities in similar situations. This white professor was talking about this community and these students were really amazed, but the way he was talking about it was in this research mode: "I've been to Little Village and these are the stories I came out with and blah blah blah," you know? It was this really fucked up thing and the whole time I was sitting in the back and I didn't know what to say. I had no idea what to say. During that whole semester I didn't say shit, it was almost like I was paralyzed by a lot of these experiences that were being vocalized because those are my experiences. Living in a community that was heavily toxic, full of people, my family included, that were getting sick and dying. Then this white professor was talking about gangs and my father is from a gang, so it was a very difficult thing to grasp because it was scary to understand how much people validate narratives when they don't even come from the community itself.

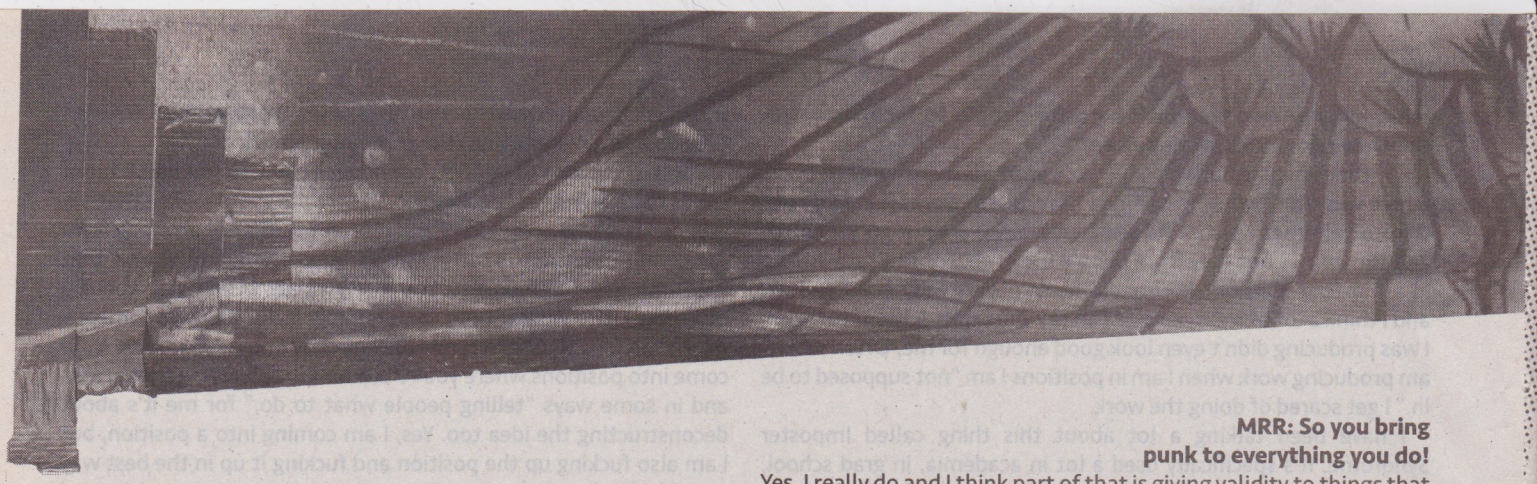
For me, the idea of building confidence came from rage. A lot of it was the element of urgency too. "There are these people that are talking about my community and it's not me. It's not anybody from my community that is talking about my community." I saw that with multiple communities. You know what? I can't talk about a place like Little Village, but I can probably facilitate ways someone [from there can]. Chances are they already know how to do it. To come into positions where you're ultimately delegating these tasks and in some ways "telling people what to do," for me it's about deconstructing the idea too. Yes, I am coming into a position, but I am also fucking up the position and fucking it up in the best way possible. We have reporters that are coming into communities and leaving. We need to change our own positions too, right? We are coming into positions of power, we are coming into positions that we so often even hated—It's about being able to take that and using your knowledge from where ever you came from.

The most applicable thing that I have in this position is the knowledge from my mom. My mom sure as hell knows how to be a fucking boss. When I first had the idea of applying to this position, I called her and asked her if she could turn on a candle for San Judas, which is this saint who we have this almighty attachment to *[laughs]*. I might not be religious, but those are things I still believe in. A lot of these ideas from my mom are so powerful because that's all she could hold onto when she migrated to the United States. To be able to take on a position like this and for others to take on positions like this, it's very difficult to build that confidence, but it's also necessary for us. That doesn't have a timeline either. That can be whenever and where ever. I also think that to assume that I am all the way there would be wrong, I still have a lot of difficulty and I am having a lot of difficulty, but that is very much part of the process.

MRR: So did your personal realization that your knowledge is valid come from starting out in activism and punk? Do these things turn up in your approach to everything you do?
There was a column that I wrote not too long ago for *Xpress Magazine* where I talk about my introduction to punk. Ultimately it turns into my introduction to everything in life. There is this thing my mom used to say and it's forever ingrained in me: "*Mas vale pedir perdon, que pedir permiso.*" It translates to "I'd rather seek forgiveness than ask for permission." In a lot of ways I agree with it and in a lot of ways I don't. That was one of the first things my mom told me when I graduated high school. What she was saying was "Fuck shit up and then worry about it later." I was running on that quote for so long in my life that I was doing shit that might have not been the best idea, but I knew that I could fix it later.

I started doing work with Richard Oakes Multicultural Center helping students find resources within the university. I saw all these first-generation students of color coming into the university and I was like, you know what? Students aren't getting the support they need and want. We spearheaded a mentoring program for first-generation students of color and with that we were like, "Who knows? It might go well or it might go bad, let's just do it." We had absolutely no support, but we did it and now it's going strong and fully funded. Those are the types of risks I have to take because there was no one really thinking about it or doing it.

One of the biggest lessons and steps to learning that ideas can pan out both in a positive and negative way was when we started doing Stay Brown Stay Down, which was the vision of creating a Latino punk fest in the Bay Area. It ultimately flopped, but the idea was that nobody is doing this, so let's try. We came together with a couple of



people, said this is how we envision this and this is ultimately what we want to do. It was a learning process, it was challenging, it was drama, it was everything, and ultimately it didn't even end up happening. For me, my vision was totally different by the end of it. At the end I didn't want a Latino punk fest, I didn't think it was important to present the work I wanted to do in that specific way in that specific moment. Although I do believe it is important, for me and for others it was like, well this is like a huge learning process for us because we know there are other things that are happening that we can work on currently. We were in the middle of a lot of different things, specifically the Black Lives Matter movement. I was looking at stuff like Black and Brown Punk Fest and all these other Black folks doing amazing things throughout the state. For me to be able do something ultimately is invested in listening to other communities as well, so assisting people already doing shit and giving them tools or whatever they need me for. Throughout this process of creating a punk fest that *didn't* happen it was important.

It's important to fail. It's really fucking important for me. It's super duper fucking important to fail, but it's also important to learn how to transform with ideas. Because although something like Stay Brown Stay Down fest didn't happen, it's still something we think about all the fucking time. What is Stay Brown Stay Down in different context? Toward the end of this we were thinking what is Stay Brown Stay Down in the context of Black people? How are we in a lot of ways responsible to the Black Lives Matter movement? How are we responsible *to* them.

All the people within this project ended up doing amazing stuff by themselves. I started to work with students of color in the university because that's where I am at, that's where my work is. Ari is doing a million other things, three other people within that collective started an all Black and brown women group that creates zines, does workshops within the community, and does work to end anti-blackness in non-Black communities. It's interesting to see how that all pans out too, but it all came out of failure in some sense.

I don't say failure in a bad way and often times we do think that. I say failure in the best way possible because we created all these things. Who knows? Eventually maybe we will come back to something like that, but as of now we don't find our passion in that and when we don't find our passion in something, we're gonna produce shitty work. That's just not going to happen and it also does a disservice not only to ourselves, but also to the communities that we care about. We wanted to create something very much linked to punk and very much linked to how we felt about punk. We weren't all satisfied with punk, we weren't too happy with it either. We knew there were a lot of things we wanted to address. We are still addressing those things, but in a lot of different ways.

MRR: So you bring punk to everything you do!

Yes, I really do and I think part of that is giving validity to things that we do too. With all the stuff I do with punk, ultimately I was doing shit that was called other things in other ways, right? When you are creating a zine you are an editor-in-chief, that's what you are doing! When you are fundraising, you are financial director, you know? We are just not calling it that. When I started being a shitworker at *Maximum Rocknroll*, I saw coordinators and shitworkers doing the type of work that people apply for in major publications, but in this case it was dispersed freely and open for everyone to learn. It basically turns the construction of editorial staff of magazines over its head and it's amazing.

It was a process for me to give validity to what I did. That is very difficult to do when others don't believe that. When I came into the Richard Oakes Multicultural Center supporting low-income students of color that were also first-generation, I thought, "I know how to do this because I know how to talk to people and I know how to talk to people about experiences." The center was completely based on academics: "how do you feel in academia and how do you work better?" That's bullshit. I'm not only a student, I'm a student, I have a family, and when you talk to a lot of these students you ultimately find out that their academics are fucked up because they have to work three jobs and have to support family still. It's really important to be able to transform our perceptions of those types of realities. Coming into *Xpress Magazine*, which is a full-on magazine with a staff, budget, and a board of directors, I had to see it as a social justice organization.

The thing about journalism is that it often does a really shitty job. Very infrequently do I see where it does a great job. The other thing is that it doesn't hold validity to people that have been doing it. This can be seen in a lot of different ways. There was a conversation that I had the second year of doing journalism school. A professor asked "how did you come into journalism and where did you first see it?" One of the ways I said I saw it was in between my aunts, because they used to be *chimosas*, they loved mad gossip. They totally love gossip, but a lot of that gossip was important things like, "Oh, this person got shot on the block and this is what happened. I heard from this person and this person and that person." That's what a journalist does, gets sources and gets information. I was seeing that shit the whole fucking time and then I come into this and people are like "you've never seen journalism, you don't know what it looks like." So kind of going back to that question of how do you take initiative to do shit, well chances are you've already seen it, you've already done it. It's about doing it, remembering, and this time calling it what it is. I'm coming into these positions and I am bringing all that shit. That was this same thing the whole time; I'm just calling it something else! In terms of punk too, I was organizing shows, doing all this other shit, I was producing work that is called something different and the fact that someone may not want to validate it? Cool. Don't do that. But all I can say is that I know how to do it and I just did it in different contexts.

MRR: You said that one of your motivations was that you didn't see people telling their own stories. Do you think that's why "journalism" invalidates how people learn how to tell their stories? Is it important to highlight the inaccuracy of recording another person's history? That often, personal narrative is never validated until someone in academia or a "legit" journalist gets a hold of it?

Often when we are looking for our histories they aren't anywhere to be found. We do have things like ethnic studies and books written by people of color, but another thing is the importance of things like archives. We don't have archives that are specifically meant for our specific intersections as well. You may have archives for Latinos, but for me (a queer Chicano) the chances of finding a book in there that talks about a queer kid who grew up in southeast L.A. are minimal to none. It's also about how you encourage people to create this archive and create things for people to access. I was reading this book called *The Archive and the Repertoire* by Diana Taylor and she talked about how there are two types of archives, one that is physical—books, files, texts. Then there is something she calls a DNA Archive, which is the living archive that is within you. She said an archive isn't an archive until someone taps into it and it comes alive. You look into a book, you look into music, you know? She says that it is very similar to our own DNA Archives. If we don't tap into ourselves, we are not telling our stories and we aren't writing those things, people will never know about them. That was a really interesting thing because specifically in our communities it's so often not of importance to document our narratives.

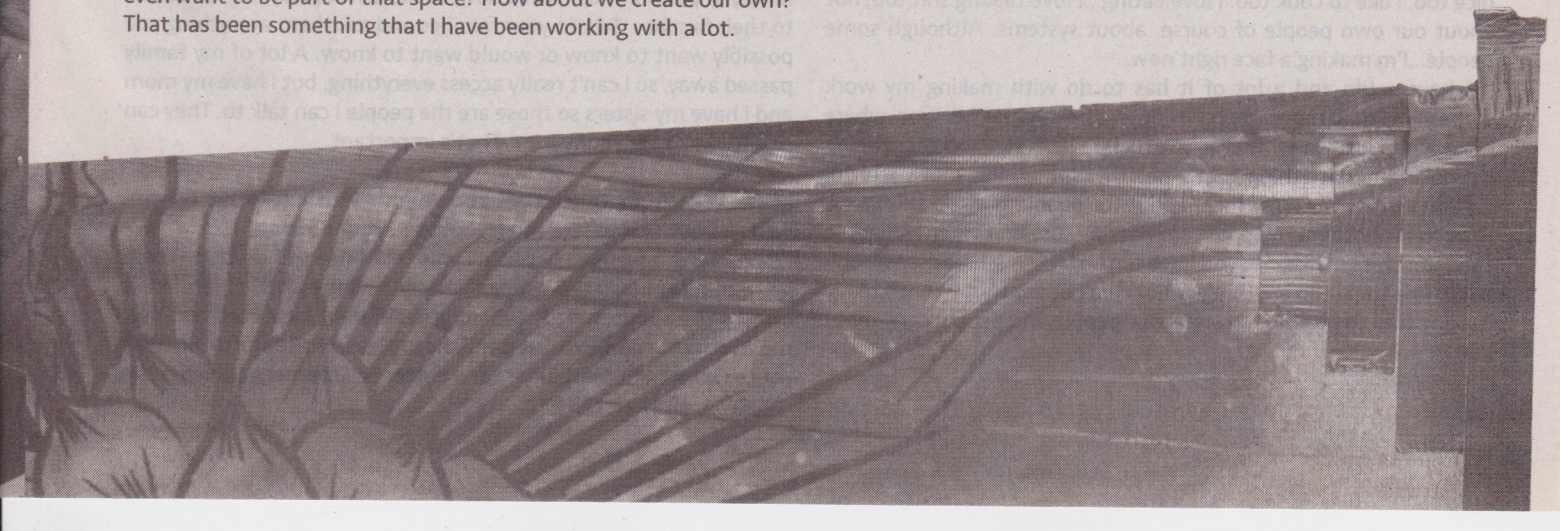
It's really interesting to see things like Facebook, how people are posting pictures of family, people are posting pictures of friends, of shows, looking at family, things like that and how important that is to a lot of people. Often times we don't have access to our families even. We see folks that are undocumented or folks that can't go home for a lot of different reasons, to them that's how they feel and that's how they see things. It's interesting to see how often we shy away from documenting our own stories, though often we could engage in that.

The thing about people in high positions, let's just say in journalism, we won't see certain see things like that as valid. We're told shit like taking pictures at punk shows is not something that is newsworthy. I would ask, to who? Of course we are gonna document the fucking white girl that is mad about affirmative action right now, you know? [*laughs*] Of course we are gonna talk about irrelevant shit, but you know the time that a first-generation student of color graduates from high school, that's not of importance. To me the question is to who? Who are you creating this information for? It has everything to do with how power is set up, power of the master narrative which is that white cis hetero men have been the ones to call the shots the whole time and that narrative does not want you to exist within these spaces. So then the question would be do you even want to be part of that space? How about we create our own? That has been something that I have been working with a lot.

MRR: How do you navigate working in journalism while being extremely critical of it, actively fucking it up? Is there disconnect between what people want to read and what you want them to read?

The shit we're taught about journalism is that it always has to be free from any opinion, you know? It must be free from any opinion, you can't bring in your experience, or any of that shit, right? Cool, whatever, I don't give a fuck. That comes from one angle of course. For example, we just did this piece about parents who lost their children to police brutality. It was a heavy, emotionally charged piece, it took us a lot of time to produce and even getting a visual was super difficult. How do you not bring an opinion to this? The shit about it is that stories will tell you themselves. You don't have to bring an opinion to it, it's gonna speak for itself. All the shit about Donald Trump, I don't have to tell you that Donald Trump is fucked up. I just don't. He speaks for himself and he is gonna tell you he's fucked up, that's fine, but I think that serves for every story.

Every story you talk about, specifically when you are talking about marginalized groups, is going to speak for itself. I don't have to bring my opinion to it, I don't have to tell you that it's fucked up, the people that are experiencing that and the communities that are experiencing that, they are gonna tell you. So in terms of finding what's important for people to read, it's more focused around bringing these really large issues into smaller focus. Something like police brutality that is happening everywhere specifically against black people, if it's a story that big we are gonna narrow it down to families in San Francisco. When folks pick up these stories and they are reading them I want them to engage in a way that is very personal, so that they know that it's happening in their neighborhoods. It's a very harsh thing to do, but I think it's also a very necessary thing to do. Often when you are not so much linked to it it's easier to not give a fuck. It's not so much my job to make people give a fuck, but it is my job for people to at least see it. As long as I am able to do that, cool. You can go on and be fucked up if you want, but it's ultimately about it being in your face. It's also very important to understand who is speaking in these stories and who talks about them. Who is the reporter? Who is the photographer? Those are very important things and I am choosing very wisely. It's really hard to do at the same time when it comes to a story on police brutality, who am I going to put to report that? Who am I gonna have take photos? That's a process in itself that never happens with the newsrooms. That shit never happens, but it's a very necessary thing. It's something that I believe in fully because so often I have seen stories of people like me that have been written by people that don't give a fuck. That can really create something terrible. It will fuck up your archive is what I am trying to say. If you are creating archives of these people, it will fuck it up for you, it will fuck up your memory, it will fuck up your history, it will disorient you.



If I can fucking leave something behind in a place like San Francisco that is going through a lot of shit right now, I want to leave them with some work where they can believe, "I have nothing to do with this. I didn't choose this for myself." Shit like gentrification, I want them to know the full reality of things that are happening. It sure as hell is not low-income families of color that are making this happen. They would never put this shit on themselves. That's really important for me, as long as you are looking at it. I want people to look at it and if they want to take it to the next step and work on it themselves, shit, I encourage and I support it fully.

MRR: What do you do for self-care while you are engaging in all of these projects?

Working practices for folks of color are and will for a very long time, at least as long as I see it, be way more difficult, it will be the most difficult thing ever. If we're talking about women of color working, that is a whole other level of stress. It's important to recognize that. There are specific privileges I carry being a working person where, one, I'm in school, I'm getting a degree; two, I have financial aid accessible to me because I have documentation; three, I have cis privilege and don't have to deal with the shit trans people of color deal with on the daily; and four, I live in gentrified San Francisco and did it out of choice. These are important things to. Certain things I can do to clear my mind a lot of other people don't have access to.

For me, punk has just always been it. There are not a lot of places where you can go and be fucked up for a bit, just fuck shit up. In the Bay, it's a little bit different. I was so stressed when I was under 21 (laughing). I guess you can say I couldn't really access my comfort until I was 21 in the Bay Area because everything was happening at bars and 21-plus spaces. Until then, I was talking to people, I was writing a lot for myself and reading. I fucking love reading. I think it's cool to read literature and magazines. But, listening to music, I am always fucking stunned by how I can never get tired of punk and I don't know that I ever will. It's always so different and it's always so wild. That whole idea that punk sounds the same? It doesn't. Sometimes I'm like, "Damn, why didn't I make that." It keeps me curious all the fucking time, new music is coming out, I'm listening to music and I'm being blown away. It's really interesting to just listen to shit, stay in my room and tell people about it—that's one really important part.

Another thing for me is that I am very heavy into traditional healing practices. I love plants and I don't mean weed. I don't smoke weed (not that it's a bad thing at all). Coming back to practices our ancestors were able to heal from, being able to heal stress by smelling a flower [*laughs*], things like that are so important to us and so integral to us that were violently taken away from us at one point. Being able to access that knowledge and hold that, it's very de-stressing. To just be with that and share it is really fucking nice too. I like to cook too. I love eating...I love talking shit too, not about our own people of course, about systems. Although some people...I'm making a face right now.

I have a life and a lot of it has to do with making my work something that I love. Being in an editor-in-chief position where I can kinda just do whatever the fuck I want, it's about changing it, making it something that's healthy, something that's fruitful and important not only for me, but for people that do this work. Reporters photographers, editors, making sure that when I schedule them for shit I'm like, "do you have time to fucking breathe? Do you have time to not do anything or not think about this?" That's really fucking nice to be able to care about people and people care about you.

MRR: If anyone wanted to do what you are doing, get involved or need an honest intro into journalism, what knowledge can you offer?

People will hate me for this, but to be journalist you don't have to go to journalism school. Straight up. You just don't. I honestly feel if you wanna learn more tools, you want to learn in some ways how to tell stories better, basically to better yourself or to better yourself in this skill, you can go to journalism school, but anybody can do this [*laughs*]. It's a major responsibility to hold people's stories, but we have to do it.

I would say read. Read anything and that means bad shit and good shit. Read it all. If you happen to have differences or you happen to have learning disabilities and you are not into reading shit, like you just don't want to do it or you just can't do it, listen to shit too. Look at stuff, watch news, listen to interviews and listen to a variety of them, don't stick with news journalism because that shit will fuck you up *[laughs]*. The thing about news journalism, is it is very heavy. Remember, it wasn't made for folks of color, so what you are going to hear a lot of is how much we fucked up. Come into it knowing that you didn't create this shit for yourself; people are actively doing it.

Another way to get into journalism is look at people who are doing it well. There are now institutes that are dedicated to this shit. There is an institute called Renaissance Journalism that is doing amazing work that is specifically catered to this idea of Restorative Journalism where journalism creates justice for people, as it should. There is this other thing called New American Media, that shit is tight as fuck. It is basically this team of people that go into different communities and they don't report, they teach people in the community how to report. They go into the community and get the fuck out, as it should be, right? They teach all people from the community how to report and in that sense they pay people from the community to report about their own communities. And there are a lot of things like *Radio Ambulante*, look into newspapers that are in your community that are doing stuff. Another way I learned to be a journalist is that I read a lot of zines. Read a shit ton of zines. It's so important and, this is like a plug and I know that we are both a part of it, but *Maximum Rocknroll* is really nice. It shows human aspects of people creating shit, which it is just really nice to see.

Do these things and if you are going into school look for those resources that are available to you, because chances are somebody has created them for you. If you don't see something that is specific to you, get with other people and try to create it. Fight for it. Fight to the fucking death for it. When we created mentor programs for EOP, we would have never thought we would have gotten them funded and we have staff for them now. Shit like that. It really sucks that we always have to fight for this type of shit, but look at history—people have been doing it for so long and have gotten shit. Talk to your family. If you really can, you know, because not everyone has access to their families. Talk to your families and ask them everything you possibly want to know or would want to know. A lot of my family passed away, so I can't really access everything, but I have my mom and I have my sisters so those are the people I can talk to. They can teach you and anybody a lot. That's important.

MRR: We didn't talk at all about your writing. What do you write about and where can people see your writing?

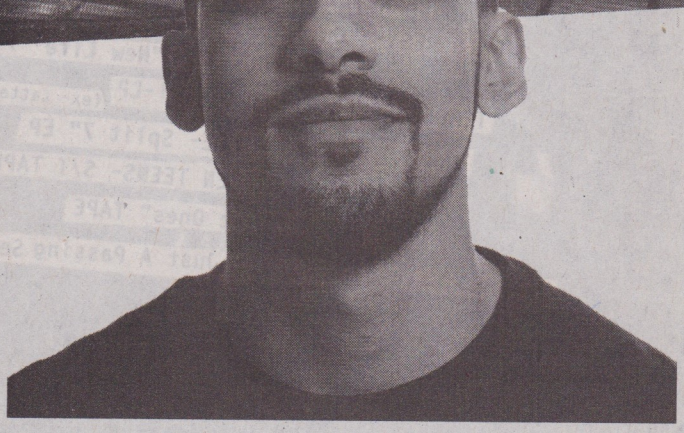
I'm creating a website because I was told I need to do that. There are a couple publications where you can find my work. *El Tecolote* is one. I write about things happening in different local communities, mostly the Mission, Excelsior, and those areas. I write stuff in Spanish for *La Opinión*. Communities for a Better Environment, which is the

organization that I do work with, they have some of my stuff up there, mostly reports and stuff like that. If you search my name, chances are shit will pop up. Majority of my work is on *Xpress Magazine*.

I write a lot about activism, so people actually doing stuff. I don't report on punk, but I talk to people in punk and every now and then I will write a column about punk. Columns on punk are very rare from me because it takes me a very long time. It's not because I'm lazy, but it's because punk is very important to me so I wanna make sure that what I'm saying is on point for me, not for anybody else. I like doing a lot of personal stories, talking to people about what they do and what they're doing. It's so important. I love talking to mothers all the time. It has been a huge basis to a lot of the work I do because they know a lot, they know about their communities; they know what they are talking about. People say that people in high positions should be the basis for your articles—well, people that come from the communities should be the basis for my articles, so to me, that's it.

Most recently I've gotten into data journalism. That sounds really boring, but it shouldn't be. It's creating original data that has to do with a lot of different things that are happening in this city, so things like housing, poverty, but also shit that is cool. That's another thing, writing about cool shit that is happening in communities, like *good* shit, you know? Shit that we should be proud of. It's super important to me when I am doing activism work although a hook of it often has people putting forward something bad happening, I try to show there is something good that we did. Here is something fucking awesome that you can do too. I am a student, so I do a lot of academic writing, but it's all within similar realms. I don't change my tone for universities, because that's not who I write for. That's what I hope I'm writing about. I hope it looks like that and if it doesn't tell me! [*laughs*]

MRR: You know we will. Any last words?
Do it. Just do it. We need to create for survival and it's an essential part of our being. A lot of our work needs to simply build for the next seven generations and we just need to continue building things with them in mind. Find the people that feel like you and do something together, because it's difficult to do things alone. We aren't alone and someone has our back out there!



READING AND LISTENING LIST

ZINES:
PUNK by Mimi Thi Nguyen and Golnar Nikpour
La Bola de Cristal by Ari Perezdiez
Angeles Kon Karas Sucias by Lola

BOOKS:
Indigenous Storywork by Jo-Ann Archibald
Mexico Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization by Guillermo Bonfil Batalla
Decolonizing Methodologies by Linda Tuhiwai Smith
The Spitboy Rule: Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band by Michelle Cruz Gonzalez

NEWS MEDIA:
El Tecolote
Xpress Magazine
Desinformemonos (from Mexico)
Radio Ambulante
Radio Sombra

PLAYLIST:
L.A. bands always make it into my playlist and some I've most recently been listening to are Tozcos, Folleto, Ausencia, Strangers, and Fumigados. I am also listening to music by Strange Faces, Pura Manía, Una Bèstia Incontrolable, Kaka De Luxe, Cremalleras, Alaska Y Los Pegamoides, Tragatelo and CCTV. If it's not punk, then it's probably Juan Gabriel, Los Tigres Del Norte, Julieta Venegas, Silvio Rodriguez, Maldita Vecindad, Kate Bush, Gloria Trevi, KR, shit on Soulection, and a ton of other stuff.

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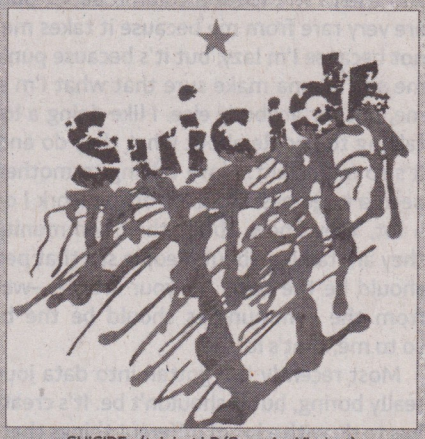

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FARRAH SKEIKY

Farrah Skeiky is my favorite punk photographer. Her photos are gritty and alive and it seems like they appear in this magazine more often than not. I'm grateful to publish them every time. Washington, DC has a long history of strong-willed women whose purposeful photography is inextricable from the scene's worldwide reputation. Farrah is a contemporary part of that legacy, the de facto documentarian of the current DC and Baltimore scenes. We discussed punk origins, holding yourself accountable, the best food in the DC area, and more.

Interview and introduction by Grace Ambrose. Photo of Farrah by Kyle Myles..

MRR: I love to start these kinds of interview with people's punk origin stories. What's yours?

I remember being really young and getting into my dad's record collection. He had stuff that I liked that was more on the classic rock side—Bowie, Fleetwood Mac, Black Sabbath. My family is from Lebanon and Sierra Leone. My dad grew up in Sierra Leone his whole life, where electricity is rationed and you're working on your homework at the end of the day wearing a mosquito net more or less. When he got to go school in the UK he collected all these great records. I started to getting into his collection and wearing out the needle on his turntable. We were living in Seattle, and he went to a record store to get a new needle for his turntable, and he saw an issue of *Maximum Rocknroll* that had a Japanese scene report. He traveled for work a lot and had just been to Japan, so he was like "Oh, Farrah would like this! She likes music!" and brought me my first issue of *MRR* when I was eleven. It's kind of crazy that now I contribute to this thing that's been so meaningful to me since I was really young.

I went to school in Seattle. It's weird because when I grew up in Seattle, all ages shows were not really a thing unless they were in somebody's house, and when you're in middle school, it is kind of weird to go to somebody else's house. It took me a little while to start going to shows, but it was easy to be an autonomous teenager and go wherever, because at least for me it was a little bit more insular. It wasn't until I moved to the DC area that I actually started going to shows. I moved to DC in 2005. I was fifteen.

MRR: Were you shooting photos at those shows?

I shot for a couple of random online magazine type websites in DC for a little bit and at a certain point I just started shooting for myself. I went to school in Baltimore and I started shooting shows around there, like at Charm City Art Space. I got my first camera, and I was just going and practicing. Friends' bands would play and that's how I started shooting. "Farrah, you take pictures, you can do this, right?" I just nodded. "Surrrre, I can totally do that. I'm sure these are going to be great." I bullshitted my way at the beginning. I was self-taught as far as shows go.

MRR: Did you go to art school at all?

I studied something completely different. It was definitely a point of contention with my parents, because I wanted to go to school to play music in a classical sense. I played upright bass and electric bass, and I wanted to go to school to be a music composition major and score movies. I feel like it's very common for a lot of first-generation American kids, when you're creative and have more punk inclinations—your parents didn't struggle in some other country for you to go to school to play an instrument. That's not a real thing in their minds. I went to school for political science and media and communication studies. Photography was just something else I did on the side.

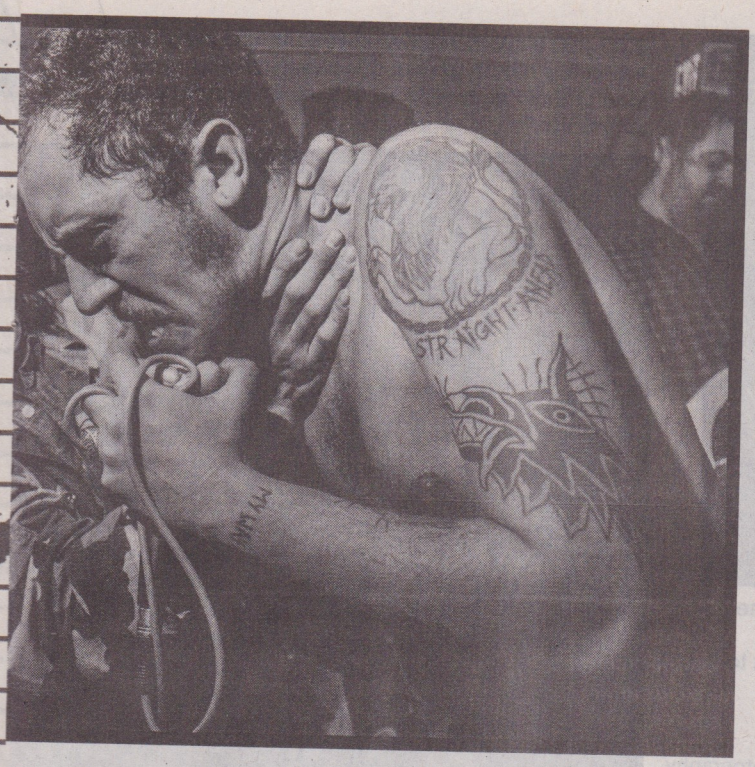
MRR: There are a lot of different reasons why people participate in punk. With photography it could be "I think this thing is important right now, I want to document it for posterity." Or "I'm not playing in a band or booking the show and I wanna have something to do with my hands, a reason to be there." Or both!

I don't know how to go to a show without a camera in my hand. I don't drink a lot and I don't like to drink at shows, whether or not I'm shooting. I've met people who are like, "I drink at shows cause I like to have something in my hands or else I feel weird." I'd think, "That's weird to me." Then the second I went to a show without my camera after having it for a while, I was like, "This is fucking weird, this is strange." This camera has become my security blanket at shows. It has given me some purpose, something to do. I've played music, not as actively as I might like, but [photography] was another way to be involved. It was difficult for me because I was and still kind of am socially awkward, and [photography] was an opportunity to meet more people and talk. If I didn't feel like talking, I didn't have to because I was taking photos. That was a major aspect of it.

I was also just really interested in it. I was taking photos around my neighborhood and giving myself random projects while I was in high school. When I went to shows it was like, "Oh. These things are *moving* and this is a

LA MISMA: "It feels so good to fall in love with a band before their first song is over. It feels good to see people who look like you making music and dominating a space."

DOWNTOWN BOYS: "This is from their record release show in Baltimore, and it's one of my favorite photos I've ever taken, purely because Norlan almost looks nervous, but he's done this a million times before."



SEM HASTRO: "The Damaged City after shows are always my favorite part. We've spent all day enjoying bands within the limitations that come with playing in churches. Later, there's release. Sometimes that means choking your friend while they're playing."

CLAW: "I love that seeing CLAW play a tiny basement show versus seeing them at Union Arts or the Pinch is hardly different. If anything, Kellie brings it even harder when they play smaller spaces."

challenge. This is not some nice venue where there are lights or some kind of stage layout." No, they're playing in a basement and you're gonna make the most of it and it's gonna be weird. It was kind of like a "challenge accepted!" thing.

MRR: Well it certainly seems like you've met the challenge. You work as a freelance photographer. You're shooting shows for fun and fulfillment but it still seems like you're consistently processing, editing, and posting the photos within 48 hours of shows happening.

I shot for just myself for fun for about a year, but then for three years I was shooting for other publications in DC and they wanted the photos the next day or within 48 hours, so I just got used to it. I work for myself. I have my own business and photography is a big part of that—it's mostly food and people, but for me it's a way to keep myself accountable and for other people to keep me accountable. If someone was just like, "Man, it's been three days, I haven't seen photos from Farrah yet!" I would take that as like, "Shoot you're right, I've gotta get this thing done." I like to get them out into the world. This is kind of how I've been known to do things, and you should hold yourself accountable to that. I'm not sure if reputation is the right word for it but it just keeps me going. I feel like my life is very go-go-go and the second I stop, that's when I might forget to edit a photo set or be like "I'll do it tomorrow" and keep putting it off.

MRR: The reputation thing is definitely true. I think your photos are playing a huge role in the way the contemporary DC scene is perceived. I can't think of the bands that are playing without thinking of your photos and I think many other people probably connect to this scene through seeing your images circulating.

I was having this conversation with somebody the other day. They were like, "Man, I feel like you're shooting a show or two every week," and I'm like, yeah, because there are a lot of shows in DC! When I first moved here, to the Maryland suburbs, it took me a little bit, but once I found those bands in Baltimore and DC, I was like, "Stuff *is* happening." I hate when people talk about DC punk in the past tense, because it's not past tense. It's happening now and it's been happening and maybe people haven't been paying as much attention to it, but it's happening. A lot of it is not saying, "Here *I* am going to a bunch of shows all the time." It's saying, "Here is *DC* having great shows all of the time."

MRR: What are your favorite kinds of shows to shoot? There are obviously different challenges between being in a basement and being at the 9:30 Club.

Honestly, I love a sweaty gross basement show where I think, "Why didn't I wear contacts? Why do I feel like I'm going to break my glasses and get hurt?" It sounds stupid because it's like, "But your gear! You spent a lot of money on this gear! What's wrong with you?!" I shot shows at 9:30 Club and Black Cat a lot, and it was nice to have somebody take care of photo passes. It was nice to have a photo barricade where no one is gonna kick you in the head, and you have this spacious little area for yourself and maybe a couple of other photographers to take photos and move around, instead of being like, "Well, I stood in this corner at the show and now I'm stuck here cause it's too full to move and I'll lose a good spot." I've had that and it's nice for different reasons, but my favorite photos are the ones where there's really very little distinction between the people in the band and the people in the crowd. If somebody tells me that they like a photo and they couldn't tell who was playing and who was just there getting hype, I like that photo even more. I think that's one of the coolest things about having shows in a basement—it's not just about the people in the front of the room, it's about everyone else who is there too. Those are my favorite kind of shows to shoot. The Damaged City after shows are great for that exact reason.

MRR: I kind of hate gear talk when it's used as a gatekeeping strategy. But for accessible,

GOUGE AWAY: "If someone looks at a photo and asks me which of the subjects is actually in the band, it means I've captured exactly what I meant to. Shows are never solely about the people playing. We all get to decide how we want to fit into that night. It's powerful."

BIG MOUTH: "Esra was seven months pregnant when Big Mouth played this show in Baltimore. I don't think I've met more of a superwoman in my entire life."

affordable, sturdy gear, what kinds of things should you be looking for?
If you're trying to shoot with digital and have that faster turnaround, there are a lot of resources online to get stuff either refurbished or secondhand. There are sites like Adorama, which has a Paypal payment plan that makes it a little bit more affordable. I've been fortunate that there are other photographers in the DC scene who maybe aren't as active with digital gear because they play [music]. I've bought lenses from James Willett, who plays in Coke Bust—that was awesome of him. I think it's about creating that network. I'm not into competition between photographers in the same scene. I think it's really silly. I think everybody has or should have their own style, their own weight, their own approach. I think that camaraderie is important. It is awesome to help someone out—"Oh crap, I broke my flash," or "I forgot batteries, do you have something, I know you shoot with similar equipment?" That's a big part of it.

MRR: Are there other DC photographers who you are excited about?
My friend and roommate Michael Andrade has been shooting the scene for about the same amount of time or maybe a little longer than I have, and I've always loved his work. He's doing more video now, which is really cool because there aren't a lot of people doing video in DC. Our friend Chris Suspect—he's played in bands forever and his punk photos are great, but he also does a lot of LGTBQ nightlife scene and art scene stuff. He's got a lot of diversity to what he shoots—it's not just hardcore shows, it's not just punk shows. It's every flavor of the weirdos of DC.

MRR: You don't shoot just that stuff too. You just opened your own business!
I run a food media business, Dim Sum Media. I do a combination of photography and social media management, PR, events, website management, email campaigns for local restaurants and food business in the city. It's cool. Some of the people I work with are old school Ellicott City-area Baltimore punks who now have restaurants in DC. Some of them are old school Portland punks or Britpop kids who have businesses in DC. It's a weird mix of people. It's own little ecosystem the same way DC punk is. That's what I do the rest of the time, and that helps pay for those moments when it's like, "OK, I would like get some more gear."

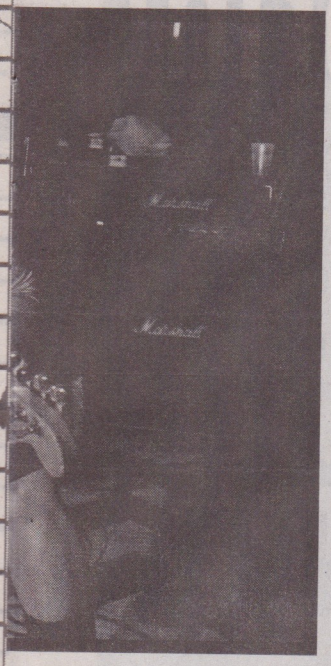
MRR: You can write the new gear off on your taxes.
I can, but it's really dangerous because if I break a lens that I use for both, then I've broken a lens that I use for work.

MRR: You shoot in color a lot when it comes to the food and people stuff. Most of the times when I see your show photos, it's in a punk context, which is very often a black and white context.
I shoot in color because I like to have the option later, but again, with the kind of shows that a lot of us are shooting and especially for something like *MRR*, we are shooting in small spaces and basements and there are crappy lights if there are lights at all. It's kind of the universal issue for photographers. Even if you are shooting somewhere like the 9:30 Club and they've got those red gels on the band, it's gonna be like, "Ugh, these photos are gonna have to be in black and white." If you have great gear you don't have to do that, but I like to have that consistency.

I think every photographer tries to go for having something about their photos so that when people see them they know who took them. I think shooting either consistently color or consistently black and white kind of helps with that.

MRR: What do you want people to see in your photos that makes them know "Oh, Farrah took that"?
It's weird because I don't know what that thing is yet but I have had people say, "I saw that photo and I knew it was yours before I saw your name," and it's a good feeling. But I'm still like, "What did I do?" I think part of it is the interaction between the crowd and the band. Capturing that motion is a big part of it. I like to capture good hair whenever it's there. Anywhere there's some hair whipping around, I would like to be there to capture that. I'm also jealous with my short hair. I would always rather get a shot that's not as clean and not as pretty but that has strong action happening in it than have a clean, better composed, pretty shot that's not as exciting. I like having that very high contrast feel to it as well.

MRR: Your photos get used in all different contexts—flyers, zines, online, record covers. Do you have any projects coming up?
I guess you're the first person I'm telling this! I am going to be creating sort of a DC area punk yearbook for 2016. It will most likely be a book that has my favorite photo of bands from that year, possible with a little bit of writing. When I say a little bit of writing, I mean a couple of sentences, either from the person who booked the show, someone in the band, or somebody with some interesting or well-phrased memory about that show in particular. It might just be photos. I'm not sure yet. I like the idea of including other voices in it as well, especially because I'd rather be shooting than writing. It will probably be out right after Thanksgiving, so that I can capture



STUCK PIGS: "This photo was taken at a NWODCHC showcase in which most of the bands had existed for maybe less than a couple months. I love it because it catches everyone in the ebb and flow of movement."

as much of the year as possible while still putting it out in 2016. I'm excited to hopefully shoot Not Dead Yet. I'm just really excited to do that book! I haven't put out any of my work in that capacity.

I'm also trying to learn about more photography. It's not just me, but a lot of really great photographers that people know of are self-taught in a lot of ways. I don't know how to take a studio portrait. I have no idea how to do that. *But* it's something that I would like to learn and take aspects of and incorporate them into something completely different. Combine different methods. I would like to shoot more film at shows. There's a weird pressure—"I could try something new when I shoot this show tonight!"—but there's always this looming thought that if the photos suck, you wasted your time and everyone else's and people are going to be mad that they don't have cool photos of their band. That's a real thought process that happens when you already have a signature style and the way that you shoot every night. Do I want to do something different and challenge myself, or do I want to have a guarantee that I'm going to have good photos to turn around?

MRR: There is that weird pressure from people—that's real! But this is also your unpaid labor.

It's important to me. It's something that I like to do. I enjoy it. I'm obviously not out here trying to make money from shooting shows at the Pinch. A lot of times it's pressure that I put on myself and maybe somewhere somebody's going to be out there being like, "Oh, Farrah's photos from that show weren't good." It doesn't bug me that much—it's more pressure that I put on myself. It would be nice to give less of fuck about that. That is an upcoming project—giving less of a fuck. Just kind of shooting things and experimenting and figuring things out for myself and finding new ways to convey what is happening in this awesome growing scene of ours.

MRR: Being a photographer can also feel like a solitary pursuit, in a way that's different than being in a band or working with people on a publication. But you're part of a collective, right? What does it mean to be in a photo collective?

I'm part of Contrario Collective, which is all women photographers. We all shoot really different things. Victoria shoots a lot of travel related stuff, and she's a photojournalism grad student. We have photographers in our collective who shoot more weddings and portraits, some who shoot more commercial things. We all have different backgrounds, but there's some overlap here and there. It's cool to have to have a support network, because even though we all shoot different things, we still get it. The other day at a coffee shop I was talking about a show that I shot and some middle-aged white dude at the coffee bar said, "Oh, you shoot punk shows? Let me show you all these photos I took of the Dead Kennedys at 9:30 Club last week on my iPhone." Having a nice little group text of other women photographers to be like, "Guess what shit happened to me today!" is really nice.

Having a network to borrow gear from is really nice. Having a network of other women to be like, "I wanna negotiate this photo contract, what advice do you have?" or "Hey, have you worked with this person before?" or "Hey, have you shot at this location before?" is nice. A big part of it is the support system. Again, we also challenge each other creatively. We'll have group shows where there will be a theme that we haven't told anyone else about and we'll see if people have figured out what the theme is across all five of our very different styles and subjects. It's a combination of creative pressure—the good kind of pressure—and just support in general. This is not an easy way to make a living. Freelance life is really stressful and it's definitely easier when you feel like you've got somebody on your side. I never really valued being able to turn to somebody and have them say, "I know exactly what you're going through—it sucks but you're going to be fine," until I was freelancing and owning my own business.

MRR: I have one last question. Punks worldwide are obsessed with going to Sticky Fingers and Everlasting Life and Jumbo Slice when they visit DC. You're a bit of a local food expert—where should they go that *isn't* those places?

Yo! Listen. Punks should go to Thip Khao. It's a Lao restaurant. Chef Seng is amazing. It's a family-owned business with a woman chef. It's not far from Everlasting Life. I have celiac, and I can go there and get almost the whole menu gluten-free. I can go with my Muslim family members and they can get pork-free anything. I can go with vegans and we'll have an entire meal where we have so much that there are leftovers. It's a really affordable, very chill, unpretentious restaurant. It's nice—it's definitely something that the family is super proud of, and the food is so good and the story is so awesome. The chef was a refugee from Laos when she was twelve and she learned to cook when she was in the refugee camps. Supporting a business owned by a brown woman and eating amazing vegan food from a cuisine that you probably haven't had before is a nice change of pace.

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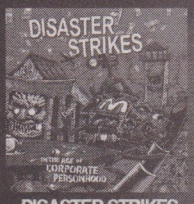

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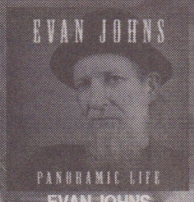

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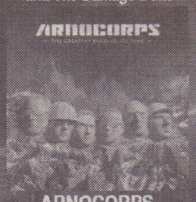

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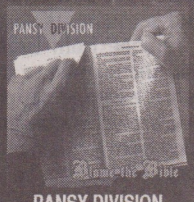

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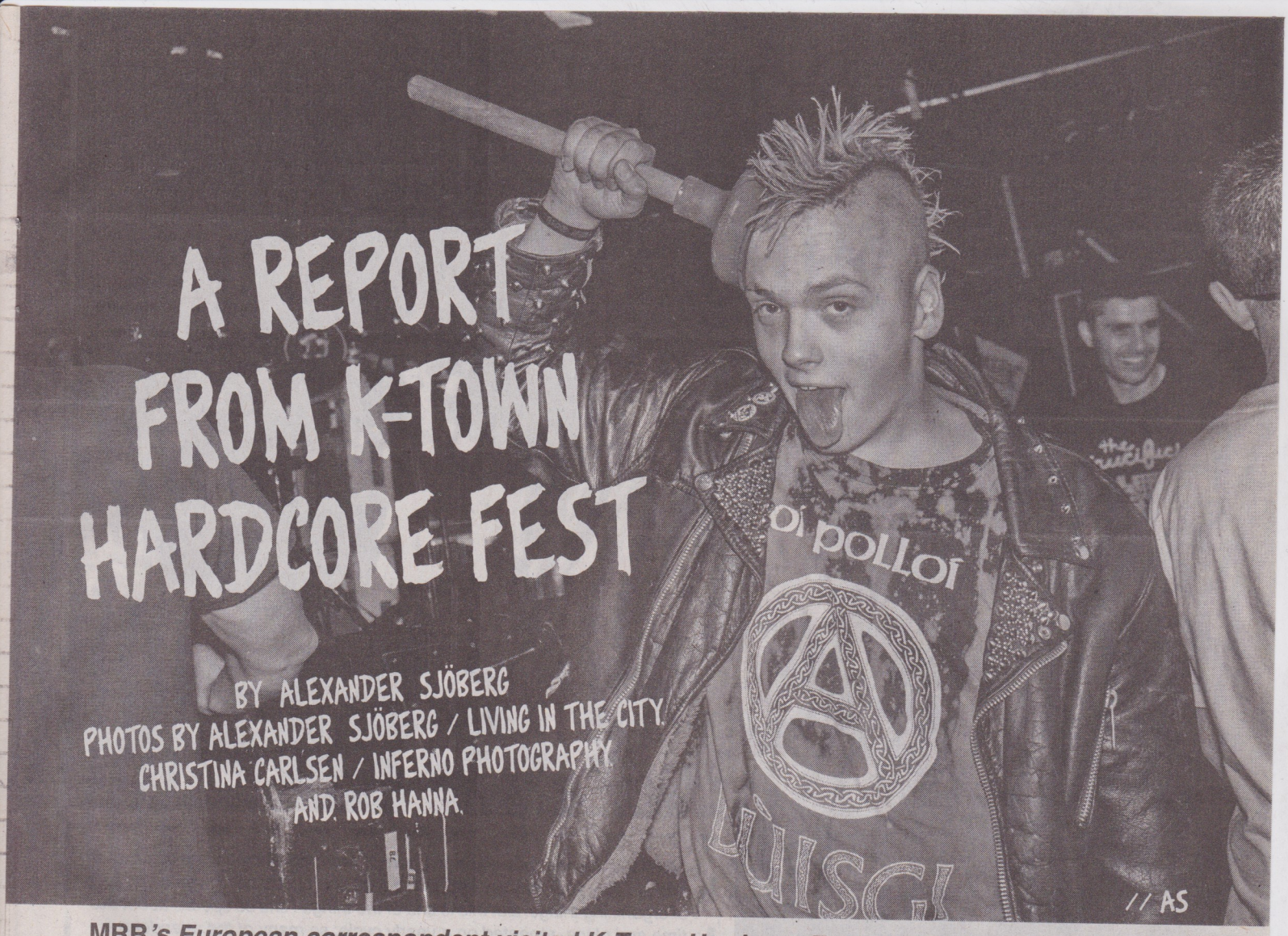


A REPORT FROM K-TOWN HARDCORE FEST

BY ALEXANDER SJÖBERG
PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER SJÖBERG / LIVING IN THE CITY, CHRISTINA CARLSEN / INFERNO PHOTOGRAPHY AND ROB HANNA

MRR's *European correspondent visited K-Town Hardcore Fest. Here's how it went down.*

It is more than visible that something's going on in the city. Something to do with mostly black-clad patched-up punks. They walk in one direction, carrying big bags and crates of beer. The mood is ecstatic, frantic almost, like something is not to be missed—somewhere at the end of the black-clad punks journey. But there's a good explanation: It's time for Northern Europe's biggest punk and hardcore-gathering: K-Town Hardcore Fest, and right now it seems like every single punk in the world is here.

This of course is an overstatement. But the second generation K-Town Hardcore Fest has grown from being a 700-people-thing to 1500 in just five years. Every year features between 20 and 30 bands, many of which are the talked-about acts in the scene right now.

K-Town started back in 2001 in Ungdomshuset on Jagtvej 69 in Copenhagen, Denmark. After a row of great festivals, the venue was lost, and the festival moved to the famous freetown Christiania for two years. Now the festival is back at a new Ungdomshuset on Dortheavej 61. And we're back there as well, as we continue the story, following the stream of punks. They're not all black-clad anymore, and the crowd is more diverse than one would think, although the clear majority must have traded at studsandspikes.com at some point in their punk career.

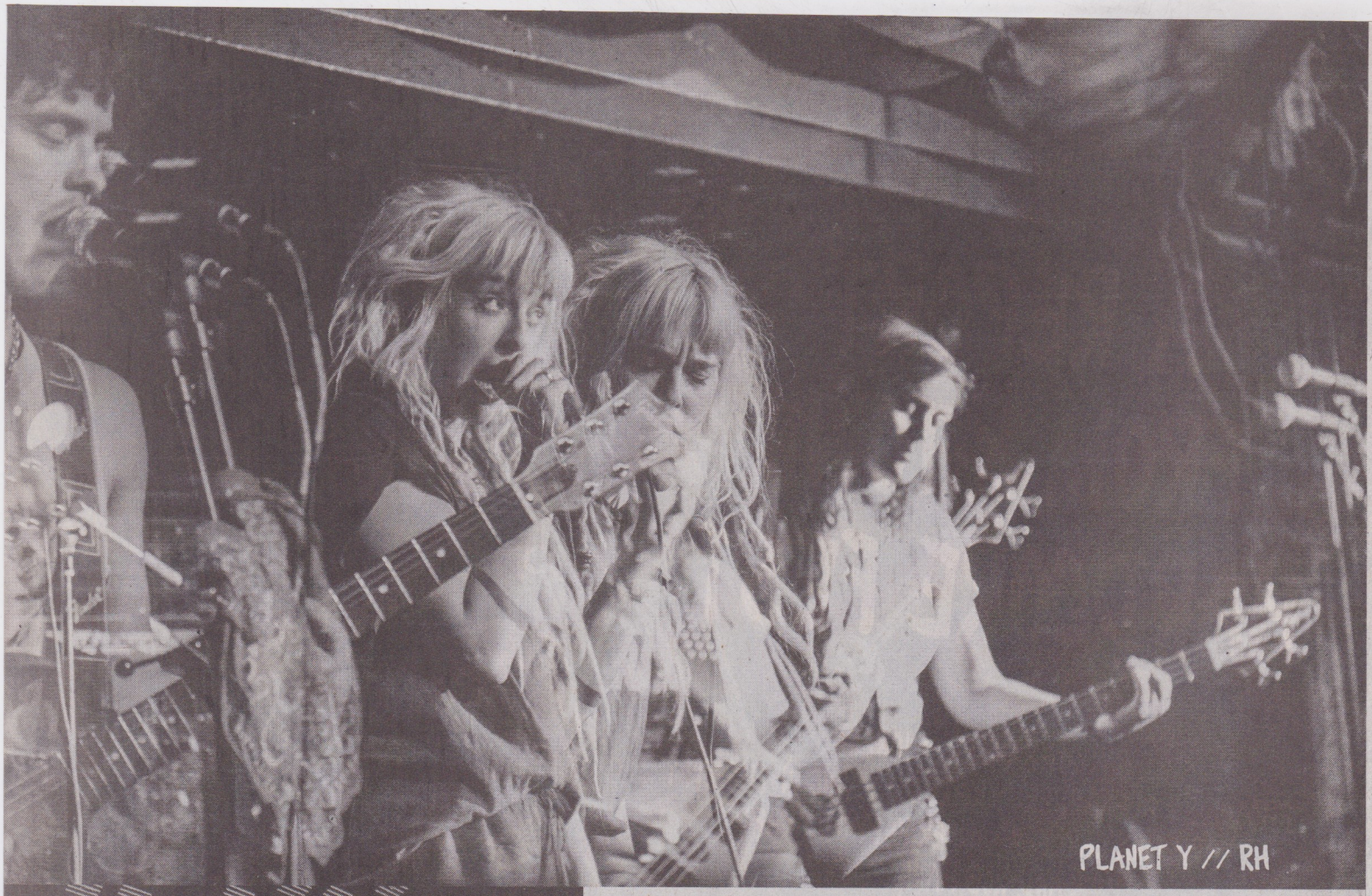
Entering the festival, the first thing you see is the huge merch area, dubbed the "punk rock supermarket" by local jokesters. This however, is far from the truth. Most of the shops feature hand-crafted patches and the like. It's easier to get suited up than to get rare records here.

As one walks into the main area, the amount of people present is striking. This is sweaty punk rock chaos in every sense of the word. But after a few cold brews, everything seems to make sense, accompanied by the cacophonic noise called punk, which this year was delivered by Protester, Tørsö, Gorilla Angreb, Rixe, No Time, Snor, and many more (just to name a few of my personal favorites). The main stage holds (legally) 600 people, but when there's a good band playing, the rules are bent and broken, and I don't want to know how many fit in that room. The four-story building vibrates as the speakers boast out distorted soundwaves, and this is how it goes until 3:00 in the morning. The real party-mongrels will then flow in the direction of the small concert hall, which hosts DJs spinning—you guessed it—more punk, while the festival's real rebels will bring their own boomblasters, and listen to disco hits in the outside area.

This festival has a certain vibe. It's like being at that mythical family reunion where your fun uncle is pulling off idiot moves on the dancefloor. A story to be told in the family for generations. Except at K-Town your uncle is multiplied by a thousand and the dance moves are stagediving, pogoing, and shouting unfathomable words in some lead singer's mic like your life depended on it. Okay, this is probably the case at many a punkfest.

But there is something to this fest that makes it special.

Now before we continue I have to admit that I am biased to hell



PLANET Y // RH

RED DEATH // CC

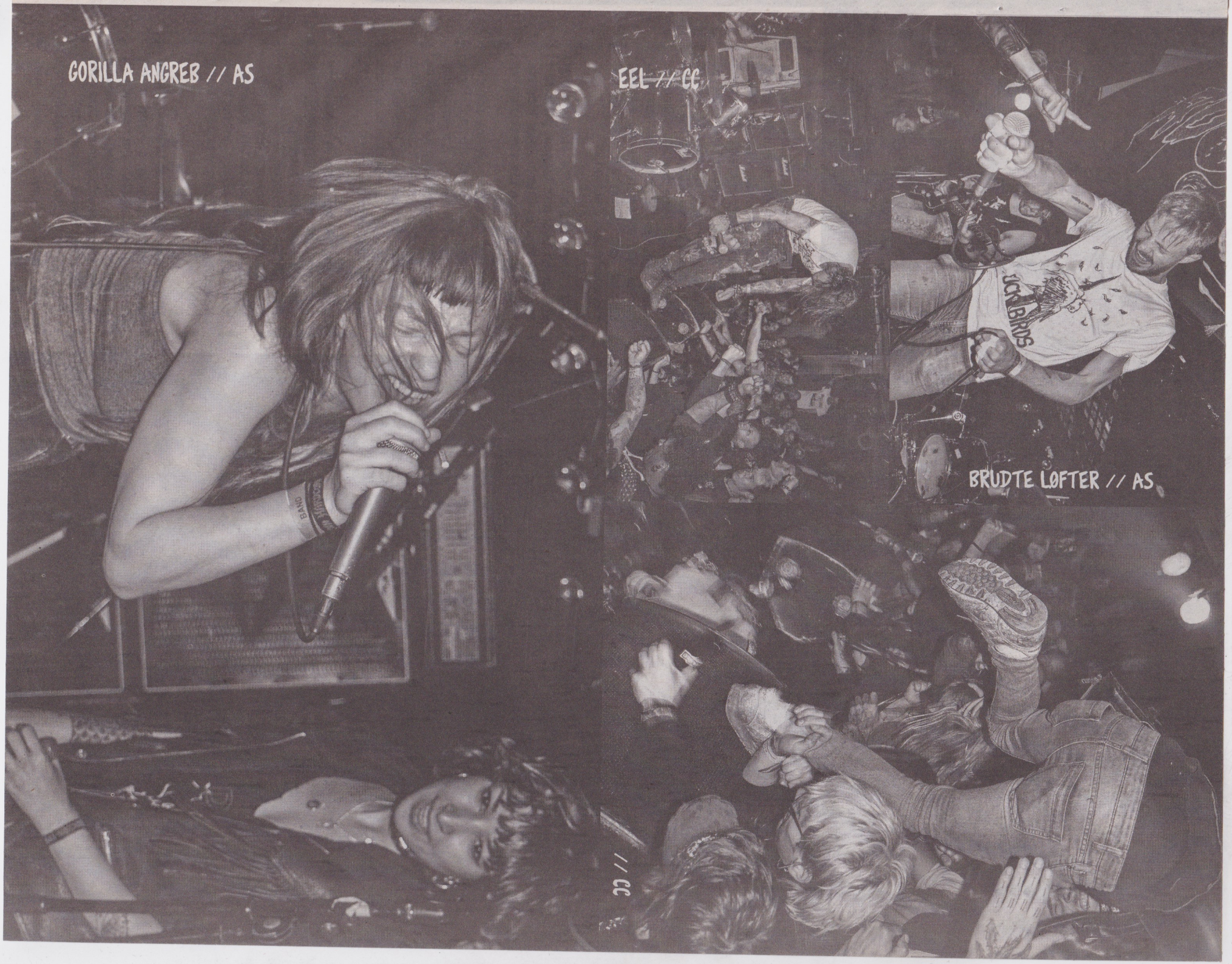
and back,' having formerly been part of the festival crew, booking bands and all. This year was my first as a guest, and I gotta say I miss being part of organizing things. But this is one of the things I find so special about this time and place, repeated on a yearly cycle: so many of the attendees are involved in organizing in some form. And the fact that the venue is a full-blown anarchist house in every sense of the word, from the broken toilets to the bookings. Only nonprofit DIY gigs take place here, and this way of thought is part and parcel of this festival. It means that the bigger names on agencies aren't being booked, but it also means that you can get into the fest for the same price as three punk LPs.

It's grown from a local gathering of punk rock nerds to a globally known event. K-Town Hardcore Fest 2016 was one of the biggest Copenhagen punk festivals to date, with more than 1500 people performing, working, moshing, partying, eating and all other things festival.

No less than 28 bands performed, ranging from unknown new bands such as Planet Y (Denmark) to well-known veterans Doom (UK). While the crew behind the festival have been (and still are) busy as hell, they took their time to give Maximum Rocknroll *a quick interview.*

MRR: You work *a lot* to make this festival a reality. How come you decide to take so much of your personal time to do this thing?
THE CREW: We feel like all of our hard work is our contribution to keeping what we love alive. But we're not the only hard workers contributing to the festival being a success. None of this would be possible without the volunteers who choose to spend their time and energy helping the festival come to life. Everyone involved in the process gives a lot, but what comes from all of the work is priceless.

MRR: The festival keeps expanding. Why don't you move the fest to a bigger space, and make it a proper big festival?
THE CREW: The spirit of K-town Hardcore Fest is very much the spirit of Ungdomshuset [the venue]. Part of what makes the festival what it is,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and has been, is the venue. It has always been an important aspect that the festival is held in a safe, inclusive space where everyone can afford to attend. If you can't afford the ticket, you can take volunteer shifts in exchange for festival entry as well as food and drinks. Keeping the festival connected to its roots, we can continue to avoid the things that go hand in hand with commercial venues: rent-a-cop security, bans on stage diving and moshing, and over-priced beer and food.

MRR: The word on the street is that you're the best and biggest punk and hardcore fest in Europe. Not kidding. This *is* the word on the street. How do you feel about that?
THE CREW: Of course we are honored that people feel this way about K-Town, but at the end of the day it means more to us that other people are as excited as we are about the festival! It gives us more energy to put into next year, knowing that our weekend in Copenhagen is a punk vacation destination.

MRR: What do you have in mind, when you make the festival program? What makes a band worth booking?
THE CREW: Our focus is to have an inclusive and diverse spectrum of bands who share our passion for DIY. We always look into the band's politics, and each year we actively search out new and interesting bands.

MRR: There's a rule at Ungdomshuset which makes paying a band a fee (almost) impossible. I'm certain it impacts your booking decisions. Wouldn't you like to remove that rule, and be able to book bigger acts?
THE CREW: We wouldn't necessarily call

it a "rule." It is more a set of values that we as a festival, and Ungdomshuset as the venue, adhere to. We are not only a DIY festival, but also a non-profit festival (those two things don't necessarily go hand in hand, unless you want them to).

MRR: But why is that?
THE CREW: It's always been the focus of Ungdomshuset, to create a space where we live by the ideals that we would like society to live by as well. It's always been an important part of the ethics of Ungdomshuset and the festival that everyone participates as equals. This is where political counterculture is so different from the rest of the music industry. We would like to create an atmosphere where the audience, organizers, volunteers, and the bands are equals. Also, we don't have "backstage VIP" areas at the festival, just for bands or shit like that.

MRR: So if someone appeared and offered you a professional venue, beefing up the project, with bigger finances and bands, what would you say?
THE CREW: K-Town Hardcore Fest is not about being "big" or booking "big bands." It's about throwing a kick-ass festival to celebrate the amazing DIY punk and hardcore scene, and create awareness about different ways of doing things. If we were to change the backbone structure of the house and the festival, it would kill the DIY spirit, which is the glue which binds it all together.

MRR: Earlier you mentioned, that politics come into play when you book bands, and it seems you take politics seriously. How does that come into play on a more general level?
THE CREW: Punk subculture itself embraces a lot of different people with different lifestyles and ideas, and we feel that organizing a DIY festival is a political act in itself. It is important to all of us, both from the crew and Ungdomshuset, that K-Town Hardcore fest is inclusive, and has something to offer to each unique pocket of attendees. We want to provide a great festival experience for everyone that's attracted to different aspects of our scene, both onstage and offstage. Ungdomshuset has a clear set of house ground rules that enable the space to be what it is, and that is a big part of what creates the atmosphere we love so much. Politically the house is steadfast in values of no racism, no sexism, no heterosexism, no homophobia, no violence, and no hard drugs—holding the festival here is politically connected to these values.

MRR: Thanks for the interview! Will the festival be a reality in 2017?
THE CREW: Oh, we'll be there! ...will you?

For the real numbers nerds out there the festival guests consumed no less than 4000 cocktails, 1500 vegan burgers, 250 kilos of fries, 600 tofu hotdogs, hundreds of vegan softserve ice cream cones, 200 liters of chili sin carne, and 2500 party umbrellas for drinks.

WORLDS OF URSULA K. LE GUIN:

Filmmaker Arwen Curry with the author during the production of *Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin*

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARWEN CURRY

Special thanks to Bill Badgley for his film expertise that helped me prepare for this interview. Interview and introduction by Megan March.

Worlds Of Ursula K. Le Guin *is an upcoming documentary film about one of the most important authors of the 20th and 21st centuries, a living icon described by the film's director Arwen Curry as "...a feminist writer whose radical imagination transformed American Literature." Daughter of noted anthropologist Alfred Krober and acclaimed writer/anthropologist Theodora Krober, the Berkeley born-and-raised Ursula Krober Le Guin came from a unique upbringing that heavily influenced her perspective. Through sci-fi, fantasy, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, she often addressed gender, sexuality, race, indigenous peoples' struggles, feminism, class, social structures, power relations, and anarchist philosophy in her writing. Now 86 years old, Ursula lives in Portland OR, where she is still writing. As Arwen describes in* Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin, *her full-length directorial debut, the arc of Le Guin's writing shows the progression of one who is always thinking and wanting to grow in pursuit of the truth.*

MRR *is incredibly fond of Arwen, who is not only a talented badass, but also someone who spent six years as a head coordinator here before going on to study and produce journalism and documentary film. Arwen secured Ursula's participation for* WOUKL *in 2008 and she has been researching, filming, fundraising, and interviewing ever since. As of press time, the film is still in production with an expected release in mid-2017. Even though Arwen says it's been hard to maintain focus at times, she has dedicated herself to* WOUKL *because she feels compelled to tell the story of a complex writer whose work has fascinated her throughout her life as a creative punk.*

After seven years of Arwen's periodic film updates, and her lending me a steady stream of Ursula's many books, MRR *had a chance to talk about her current directorial perspective and the progress of the film. Arwen also discussed her thoughts about what is behind Ursula's work and inspiration, sharing with us the insights of a documentarian who has grown to know her subject over a span of many years.*

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MRR: Le Guin is very loved by many punks, outsiders, radical leftists, anarchists, and weirdos alike—why do you think people feel this connection with an 86-year-old woman living in Portland from a middle class background?
That's a great question. It's because she can and will go anywhere and do anything. I'm not talking about in real life—in real life she would rather stay in the neighborhood, go to the farmers market with her husband Charles, and read and play with the cat. As a human being and the way that really matters she is absolutely unafraid to talk to anyone, listen to anyone, look anyone in the eye and think about anything, which means the whole world is open to her. And that's very rare even for a writer. I think a lot of people see themselves in characters she has written and they see the possibility of a world in which they are not marginalized. Or maybe I should put it that the margin is respected, that maybe they are on the margin, but the margin is valued and cherished in her work. I have seen people at conventions where we have been filming, say she has saved their life in a real sense. She writes in a way she has described as "slantwise"—kind of sideways, on the margin, skirting it on the fringe. She writes to people who are not "ordinary Americans" in that sense, she writes to those of us who are a little weird. I count myself among those people. I'm trying to think about why that is, but I don't think I have a better explanation than anybody else who has read the books. She's unafraid to do weird stuff, to make up weird places and that's reassuring to people who don't feel at home in the mainstream. That somebody is out there inventing other paths to go down that they can follow or maybe be inspired to make their own paths. For the punks I think that connection is pretty obvious.

MRR: She definitely pushes those questions in her books, especially gender, like in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, and characters of color.
She has characters of color in many of her novels where that's not the point, she's not trying to make a point about it, it's just that's how people look in that world. In other cases she is trying to explore the essence of gender, in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, which was in 1969. The question in that book is how much of what we think about ourselves is based on the gender we were born into, and can we escape that. That was a question people were beginning to ask in society but no one had really asked it in a book yet, and it was a very important question to ask that mainstream society is tangling with right now. In what ways are we limited and trapped by this concept of gender, and in that book she really beautifully plays it out in this relationship between two people. Can they think about each other without thinking about each other limited by this idea of male and female. And what would it be like? It's a dangerous idea, and that's what makes her a transgressive writer.

MRR: What was your first exposure to Le Guin's work?
I can't remember exactly the first time I read it, but I remember it as an influence in my life, in my house as a child, kind of like someone who's always been there, like a relative, Aunt Ursula on the bookshelf. It was a voice that had a lot of wisdom, but also a lot of warmth and was familiar to me and I think had an influence on me in some kind of unconscious way. I then began to read more of her sophisticated books as I got older. I remember reading *Lathe of Heaven* and being impacted by that also as a kid, and some of the other more sophisticated novels came along even later, like *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed.*

MRR: How would you describe the early days for Le Guin as a young writer? How do you think these experiences helped form her perspective?
I was just thinking about this, because I asked Ursula what books were meaningful to her. She also grew up in a house with books where reading and writing were considered important normal activities people did, and so I think she was privileged to have that environment around her that was supportive of her writing without making it into a big deal, "Ursula's big deal, ooooh she's a writer," it was just a normal activity people did, a good activity, and I think that was healthy for her as a writer. It was an environment where she wasn't under scrutiny, but she was supported. To have the books around was also very important, and I know that she had a lot of stories both written and spoken in her early life from European legends written down, and Native Californian legends that she heard directly from people that worked with her father who was the great anthropologist at UC Berkeley, Alfred Krober.

MRR: Her mother was also a writer, right?
Her mother was also a writer, although she didn't write the book she's most famous for, the book about Ishi, until Ursula was an adult. She was primarily a mother as a profession when Ursula was a child, and her writing took shape over the course of her life. I don't know to what degree Theodora Kroeber was writing and not publishing, she may have been writing the whole time, and Ursula hasn't told me about that, but she wasn't a published as a known writer until quite a bit later. Ursula's father had been approached to write that story, because he was the one who knew Ishi, and he did not like to talk about it, he was grieving still over the painful loss of Ishi and the complicated friendship, and he didn't talk about it, according to Ursula, and he didn't want to write about it. So, Theodora did it and she's the one that had that storytelling talent that came up with this irresistible book. The book has been controversial, people say, "Oh, it wasn't quite like that, it's romanticized," or "He's not the last of the Yahi Indians." There were criticisms about the book, but the book as a story was extremely compelling to people, which means that people did key into that part of history which is incredibly tragic and important to pay attention to.

MRR: It sounds like both of her parents were a big force of influence in her life.
Hugely, I think she was very close to both of them. I think her father's work had a huge influence on her writing, not necessarily his writing, but his work as an anthropologist because her work, as you know, in science fiction and fantasy, has to do with exploring different worlds, different kinds of societies meeting each other. She performs these experiments by tweaking the circumstances, the setting, the variables that might influence one society or another, and looking at what happens when they meet each other or if one of those variables is changed. These are kind of social science experiments played out in the arena of fiction. Science fiction, because it's so open to different fantastical ideas, is the perfect place for this. So it was like this perfect storm for her, of finding this genre fiction that would allow for her to perform these experiments, and then having this incredibly rich background from her early life of stories from all over the world, and the understanding that stories were important. In terms of her mother, I don't know if her mother's book influenced her. I think she was writing long before that book came out, but I'm sure that her mother's personality, which she's described as very charming and loving, had a huge influence on her.

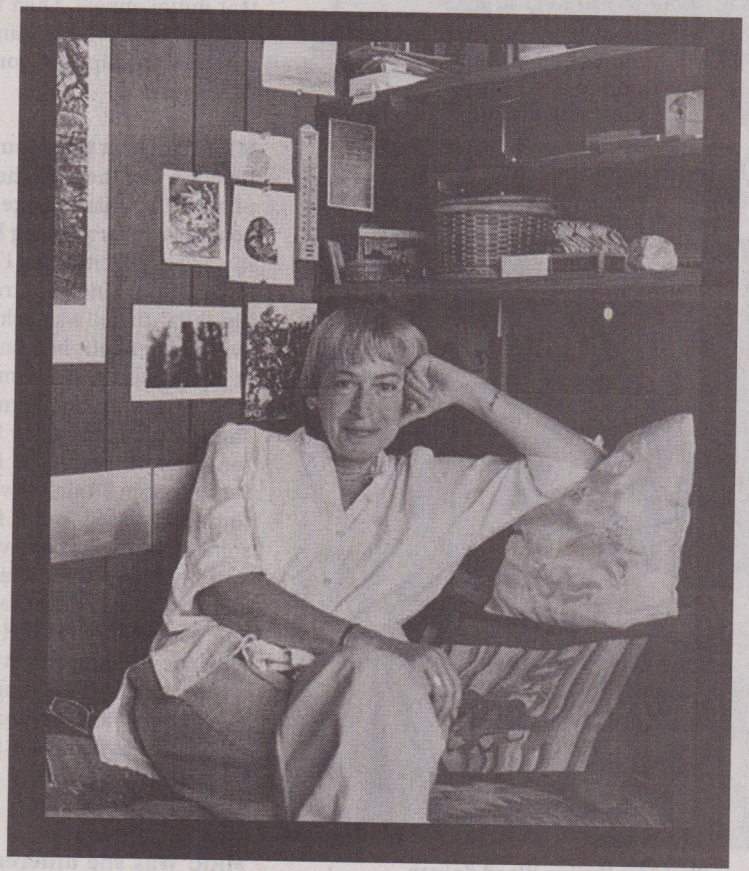
MRR: In your opinion, what makes Le Guin's voice unique to other writers of her time?
You could say Le Guin's heyday of influence was in the 1960s and '70s, if you want to pick a particular time of when she came into the public eye. But I'm not sure if that's the most important thing about her, I think her overall career is more significant than that little blip of excitement she caused around that time. During the '60s and '70s she was a part of a loosely organized, or maybe not organized, group of writers known as the New Wave of Science Fiction writers. They were more interested in the kind of influences of social sciences, psychology, sociology, anthropology, these same questions of human society, how people think and feel, how they organize themselves, as opposed to the previous iteration of science fiction which was much more concerned with technology, and intergalactic warfare. We're talking about Heinlein and Asimov, those guys, so in a sense she was of her time in that she was with other writers like Samual Delani and Harlan Ellison, experimenting with these new ways of using science fiction to talk about meaningful things. In another sense, I think she's most important because of the entire trajectory of her career, and her perseverance and her looking at all angles of important problems of human society. One of the things that's unusual about her, as opposed to other writers, is that she's willing to come back to something she's already written and talked about. Maybe she didn't get quite to the right point, or maybe she hadn't grown enough in her own self as a person to talk about it the way she really wanted to, and so, she'll come back to it and write more stories around it. Rather than correcting what she did before, she'll add to it and build a better understanding. She's interested in trying to really tell the whole truth, even if that takes multiple tries, instead of trying to do these brilliant one-offs which then disappear.

Ursula Kroeber, 1950s

MRR: Now that you have spent time with her, how do you feel Le Guin's personality is reflected in her work?
One of my goals of the film that has developed over time, is to share the experience of spending time with Le Guin with other people who can't be in the room sitting with her, to basically bring her into the room. I think that's not just something fun to do because people are fans and they want to meet her, but is important because she has important things to share with us and they are not all in her writing. One of the most important things about her is how she manages to be who she is as a person, and be this famous writer. How does she manage to be such a grounded and compassionate, together human being and a prolific writer? It's not as easy of a thing as it might seem. One question is, how do you become such a prolific writer and raise three children and just live a normal life? It's really an amazing feat, and some of it has to do with her family, some of it her resources of her personality, and that's something that I think will be meaningful to creative people who want to know how to do that in their own lives, and I'm looking forward to sharing that. Then I will also be talking about her work and who she was at different times in her life when she was writing different things, and I don't know all those answers yet, but they will come out in the film. It's one of the goals of the film, to talk about her evolution as a writer.

MRR: Le Guin is often described as a feminist writer—how do you think she expresses feminism in her work?
Some of Le Guin's expression of feminism as a writer is about the point of view of her characters, and her point of view as a writer. In her early career, she's told me, she was writing as a woman trying to think like a man, using the predominant voice of the science

fiction protagonist, which was male. Because she's a writer, and she's smart, she easily absorbed that voice because we're in a male dominated patriarchal society, that's the voice that we internalize as women unless we've really gone through the process to find a different voice. She began from that place, and her early novels are written from that voice. It wasn't until that second wave of feminism in the 1970s, that she went through the process of understanding that she actually was the outsider. She wasn't this male voice, and if she was going to keep writing, and be honest with herself, she had to come to terms with being the marginalized person and writing from that point of view. That shifted things for her, and changed the way the books were written, and some people didn't like it. Some people felt like she sort of lost her "edge," but those people, who were mostly men, I think they were saying she's no longer this "badass women" who's doing our thing with us, now she's just some wishy washy feminist. Time told a different story, which is that transformation really allowed her to grow into her true power as a writer. The arc of her feminism as a writer is throughout the stories,but in each individual story she's also concerned with questions of gender and the power balance between people, but I think if you want to understand her power as a feminist writer you have to look at the whole arc of her career and how it developed over that time.



Ursula K. Le Guin, 1980s. Photo by Marian Wood Kolisch

MRR: "...and when they tell you that it's second-class work because a woman is doing it, I hope you tell them to go to hell and while they're going to give you equal pay for equal time, I hope you live without the need to dominate, and without the need to be dominated. I hope you are never victims, but I hope you have no power over other people. "

This is an interesting quote from Le Guin during her commencement address at Mills College in 1983, which while demanding her mostly female audience stand up for themselves and hold feminist ideals, she goes further to include a warning against being agents of patriarchy, essentially reminding these women that they still need to check their privilege and not hurt others while demanding to not be hurt. I see this type of compassion seems to often get forgotten when talking about feminism, especially in the mainstream—what experiences might have lead her to say something like this?

I don't think she's writing about the movement of feminism per se. She's writing about power a lot of time. How people exert power and how people submit to power and basically the movements of power, including the patriarchal system and the people who are oppressed by it. I think what is fascinating about Ursula K. Le Guin's feminism, and what I hope to do in the film, is that you can see it evolving and changing over time. People who are our age, I know you're ten years younger than I am, but people who have experienced third wave feminism tend to think of second wave feminists as just there. Like, they went through this time, they became feminists, and there was feminism. It was more of a time of transformation that happened to each individual person at the time, and what was that like, because when they were on the other side, they weren't feminists. What was the difference between where they started and where they ended up? We don't know that about our mothers and aunts and a lot of famous feminists we know because they don't articulate it that way, but we have an opportunity with Le Guin to see it in a unique way opening up and evolving.

Some of that happens in the work, in the *Left Hand of Darkness* and her work in the '80s when we see her claiming it and saying, "I need to explore writing from a woman's perspective. I was writing from a man's point of view, why what I doing that?" Some of it she talks about in her writing but not directly, and she will talk about it directly in the film. Basically she's willing to say, "I wasn't talking for myself before, now I am. I wasn't being totally honest, now I'm going to try and do that." That's hard to do I think, to go back and say, "Maybe I had a filter, a shade in front of my eyes, and now it's been lifted, and I'm going to try this again." She wrote three books in *Earthsea*. The wizards were male, the protagonists were male, the female wizards were crones who weren't respected and mixed potions in their huts, and we didn't look into why. Then she went through this transformation in the '70s and '80s and she came back to *Earthsea* and wrote three more books from those points of view. That's what I mean, that she is willing to turn it around and look at it from another side, without putting down what she did first, which is also important, not to say, "everything I did sucked, now I'm going to do it right." She's saying, "that was part of it, now I'm going to do it again, now I'm going to look at it with this new power of perception that I have." I think when we hear her story we are going to understand feminism better.

MRR: Le Guin has been recognized for her ideas of anarchism in her work, particularly in *The Dispossessed*. When interviewing Le Guin, how did you observe politics playing out in her life and subsequently in her writing? What are your impressions of Le Guin's politics with regards to *The Dispossessed*? Have

her views on *The Dispossessed* changed over the years?
I think she's pretty clear in *The Dispossessed*. That's not a dogmatic book, that's not a "this is the society I think we should have," it's called an ambiguous utopia, the reason for that is because it's not really a Utopia. She's not saying Anarres is the way we should structure society, there's a lot of things wrong with it. It's too bleak, it doesn't have enough love, there's not enough culture, it doesn't have a lot of things, it's not enriched in the way that she probably feels we need to live. She's examining what you sacrifice there.

I think she's very intrigued and sympathetic to anarchism, but she doesn't think it's a clear cut solution by any stretch of the imagination. As far as she actually practiced it, I don't think she really has. It's been a practice of the imagination, which is incredibly important, and the fact that it's an important book to people thinking about that and anarchists is proof. She wasn't starting a commune somewhere, she was writing and that was her action towards thinking about a better world. As far as her politics, I would say she's a humanist. She's interested in a better balance of people in society and compassion to people in general, she's a leftist. I don't think she's a practicing anarchist, she's an anarchist of the imagination. The work that comes to mind as well as *The Dispossessed*, is *Always Coming Home*, which is an exploration of what it might be like if we were in a society that was not always striving to progress but was content to stay in balance. What if we weren't trying to move forward all the time but we were just trying to live peacefully. What would that look like? Not in some kind of a backward way, but with complex technologies and advanced ideas, if we just didn't have that motivation to continue scrambling. What would that look like? I guess I would talk about Le Guin's politics more in terms of her inclinations rather than her party politics. That said she hasn't shirked away from speaking out in many instances, in defense of writing itself and in defense of other writers, and in defense of other vulnerable people.

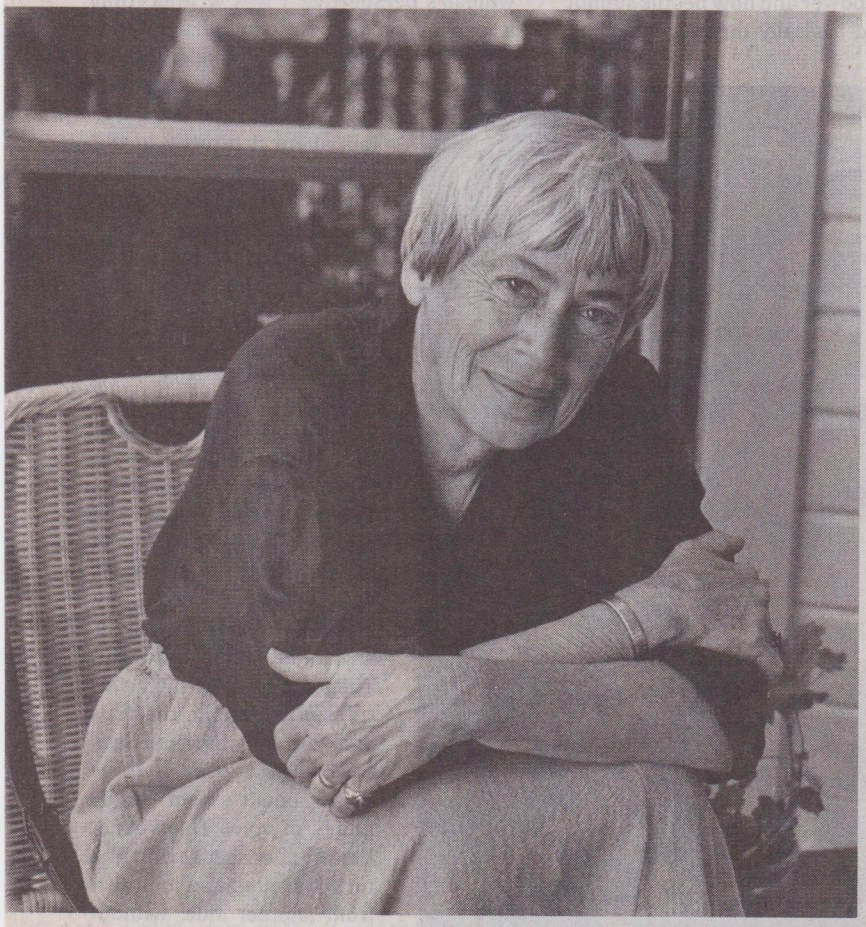


Photo by Marian Wood Kolisch

MRR: What was the process of getting to know Le Guin—how did you first make contact? I know you had been thinking about it for a long time.
I was thinking about it for a while before I ever made contact with Le Guin. I wrote her a letter, on paper, and I tried to explain to her who I was, in the most relative succinct way I could by showing her the things that meant the most to me, what I have accomplished. That was part of it, the other part of it was she was encouraged to read the letter by a mutual friend of ours, Moe Bostern, who Ursula knows and respects which was an endorsement at the beginning to pay attention to that initial appeal. Then we eventually met and started talking about what I wanted to do with the movie and our relationship has gone on from there for the last seven years.

MRR: The first time you met Le Guin, what was going through your head? What were your first impressions of her? Did this change over the course of the years you were interviewing her?
It was very exciting, as I'm sure it would be for any fan of Le Guin's, kind of a dream come true. Also, I had this big thing that I was asking of her so I was absorbing everything about her, and also trying to make my case at the same time. We met for a glass of vermouth on her terrace at her home in Portland and exchanged some small talk. I tried to explain to her what I hoped to accomplish with the film, and I think it made some sense to her, I think. I was very impressed. I expected to be impressed, but it felt very familiar to me. Unlike some writers, she's not writing autobiographical fiction, so it's not like, "there she is on the page, writing from her own life" but on the other hand her voice and the feeling you get when you read Le Guin's fiction is consistent with the feeling you get when you're with her. There is a warmth to the language and a laser sharpness to the perceptions, and humor and sophistication that come across and bridge over from the fiction. I felt myself to be in familiar territory when talking with her because of her writing.

MRR: Was she different from what you might have expected, were there any surprises?
Well I didn't know her as a person, so there were surprises, but nothing terribly off course. There was a moment when I was looking for conflict in the story, in her family and personal life, and of course she's had conflict in her personal life, but I learned pretty quickly that I wasn't going to find this conflict or controversy in Le Guin's life, and that tension can exist in the trajectory of her career, in the transformations that she went through, which you can see through her books. Then in her personal life, she's been pretty steady.

MRR: Did this change over the course of years you were interviewing her?
I think that the relationship just deepened, became more nuanced. I've had to ask a lot of her, and that's always tricky to do. You're sort of asking and asking and asking, can I shoot this, will you sit here with this hot light in your face for two hours, will you walk

across this canyon in the scorching sun. I try to be careful with how much I ask her but I end up asking a lot. Most of the time she's extremely patient, and sometimes she loses her patience with me and I'm not surprised with that, but regains it, quickly, fortunately. I would say that our commitment to each other to get the film done has deepened, because now she's invested a lot of time and energy as well. She wants to see it be made and be made well. We've come more into step with trying to finish it, but that said, it's largely that it's a huge act of faith on her part. She is trusting me to tell the story right and it's a huge responsibility, and I feel incredibly honored.

MRR: Was there an intended theme or story you wanted to share when you started working on the film, and if so, what was it?

I want to tell Le Guin's life story as intertwined with her story as a Western writer, that's one of the themes of the film and it's gotten more developed over time. She wrote about these fantastical worlds that don't exist but she's very rooted in places in her life that she's returned to over and over. We've tried to shoot in as many of those places as we can. It's not only the physical setting of these places, which include SE Oregon desert, the Oregon coast, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Napa Valley; it's not just the physical that was inspirational to her but more the residency of these places. The starkness, what they symbolize. In terms of the Bay Area I consider her a part of the fiction of this place, both as the daughter of Theodora and Alfred Krober and as a person who grew up right after the Victorian romanticization of native people's disappearance. She's a writer who has the tool of science fiction and the bloody legacy of the disappearance of the Bay Area's native peoples; she's confronted those things in her work. That is an important theme, as the daughter of the white people who have settled here, what is that legacy and what it means.

MRR: If I were to ask you the same question seven years ago, has it changed since then? Was there a progression?

It's changed, it's become more clear. Some things got pushed into a corner and left there for a while while I followed other ideas, and then later on I came to look at them again and realized that they were still at the heart of it. It's been more like a spiral, I've come back around to the same things over and over. Over time some of the things that I thought I wanted to talk about have fallen off, and the core concepts become more clear. That's why it helps to take more than seven years to make a film. I'm joking a little bit.

MRR: Right, and Le Guin lives in Portland, and you live in SF. How did this distance affect the process of making the film. Positive? Negative? How did this distance affect your thinking?

If we lived in the same city I imagine I'd have a lot more footage, but that's not necessarily a good thing. We've used the time we've spent together really well, I've been up there a lot to shoot. It's not that far, I can get up there and film with some planning and have done that when finances have allowed it, but the distance is probably helpful too. It gives time for the ideas to distill and our relationship to evolve over time, without being in each other's faces all the time.

MRR: What types of technical difficulties did you encounter along the way? Not just money.

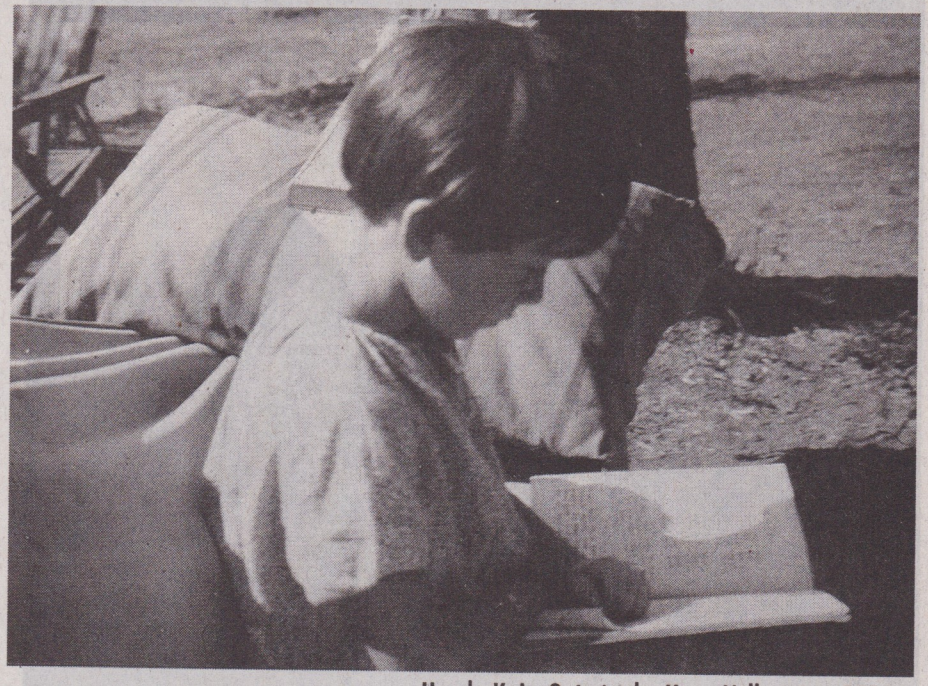
There's some really boring stuff with different codecs, things being shot on different cameras that have to be ironed out in editing. There was one time when I wiped most of the files for the archival photographs that I had scanned of Ursula's, and I had to go all the way back to Portland and scan them again for 100 hours.

MRR: What a nightmare.

It was, you know, a nightmare pretty much. I was able to do it, you just have to grin and bear it. It wasn't a technical problem, more of a human error. So far so good, other than that.

MRR: What really worked and how are you going to carry that on to the next project?

Well you know how sometimes when you're doing something professionally, and you take on the attitude of what you think that is supposed to be like, maybe the way you talk or the questions you ask would be a little different because you're playing the role of the filmmaker or whatever your job happens to be. I've done plenty of that. I tend to feel uncomfortable doing that and I'll slip into that role. Sometimes I see myself doing that and I have to do it because that is what is being asked of me and I can't succeed otherwise. In this instance, since it was my film, I made a pact with myself early on that I was going to be myself as much as I possibly could, all the way through. You know, present myself with the zine I used to write, and my background in punk, my real family, my real friends, the complexity of who I really was and not just the professional side of it. All that, while being professional of course. I'm really glad about that because my whole self is invited for the project. And that is a goal I've had in my creative life, so this was an experiment to see if I could succeed as my real self and not trying to succeed in putting on a suit and tie, whatever it is. I'm really very glad I decided to do that.

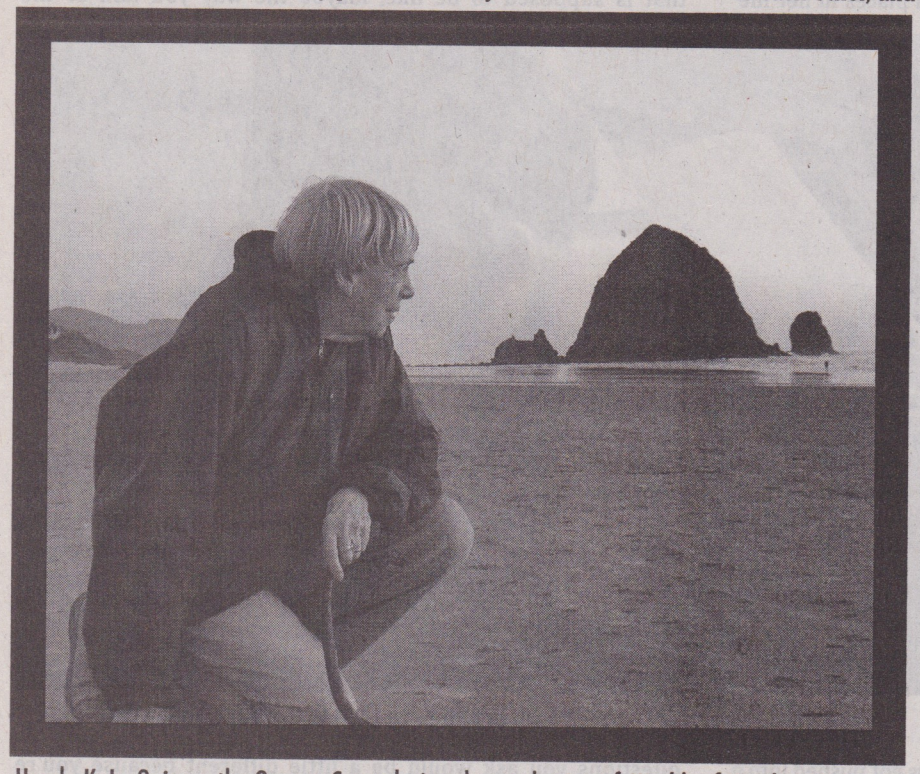


Ursula K. Le Guin in the Napa Valley circa 1934

MRR: Have there ever been any other documentaries on Le Guin? Why this one, now?

There have been some good radio documentaries, and I don't think that there have been any film docs. There have been interviews but not documentaries, this is the first. For one thing, Ursula has not been given her due in her career. In the last five years, you can see that turning around, she's been lauded, she's getting overarching honors for her overarching career, which she fully deserves. People are starting to talk about her as an iconic figure in American Literature as a whole, and not some dusty corner of it.

MRR: While she's still alive too.
Yeah, so that's part of it. People have not been paying attention like they should have and I was lucky to be the one. The other part of it is she's a very private person. That's not to say she doesn't participate, as I said she pays attention, she participates in public life, but she doesn't let cameras into her house. She talks to the press, but she doesn't like to talk to cameras. That was something that we came to an agreement together that she would talk to me on camera, and that was an achievement on my part I would say.



Ursula K. Le Guin on the Oregon Coast during the production of *Worlds of Ursula K. Le Guin*

MRR: How did you do that?
Well, she agreed, I would say it was a conversation between us, which felt more natural to her than being asked a bunch of questions with predetermined an-swers I wanted. I've tried to keep it more or less painless, but I know it's still sometimes a hassle and she tolerates it, basically to see us through. It's extremely generous of her.

MRR: In the film you travel with Le Guin to the specific places that have inspired her writing, which is a really unique approach that will no doubt capture the imagination of those who have read her books. Can you give me an example of your favorite spot you went with her and why it was your favorite?
I enjoyed visiting her ancestral home in the Napa Valley because I felt connected to it as well. I grew up in the Bay Area and as a child we traveled to Northern California. Those sights and sounds were closer to home for me, I felt a connection there. On the other hand I loved the drama of the high desert, where I'd never been, and is a place full of sage brush and volcanic rocks, wild horses, huge flocks of birds, just a very amazing landscape and I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't gone to film her. If we had time, we probably would have gone to more places, but I've enjoyed what we've seen so far.

MRR: What other places would you have gone?
I think Mount St. Helens with her, somewhere in the snow. Walk around Berkeley. We will film in Berkeley, but I'm not sure if it will be with her. The American South, where she spent some time as a young woman, maybe New York. So, there are some other places maybe we will go to film, but not with her, because she's not doing a ton of traveling.

MRR: What are you hoping people will take away from the film?
I hope that people who see it will be inspired to be fearless in their creative work, and in their everyday lives, to not be rigid, to listen to each other, and to actually use their imagination in a real way to think about how we could live differently than we do.

MRR: If you were to give advice to an aspiring documentary filmmaker, and let's assume they were cool, what advice would you give them? What would you have told yourself?
As in many things, I would have trusted myself more probably, creatively and professionally. I think that's important to do. I would have treated it as a collaborative effort earlier on. I would have found the team members that I needed sooner and really trusted them with the film so I would have a team of people so I wouldn't have been so alone on the journey which is my tendency to take it on all myself. It doesn't work all that well with this particular medium. I think I would have found a team of partners earlier on so that I would have had more stamina and strength to get me through the times when it became sticky and harder to move forward.

MRR: How does the movie end?
We're still writing the script, so it's not clear exactly what the last thing we'll see is. It's basically Ursula reflecting on her own legacy. She has this essay talking about inventing old women, and she says, "as far as I know, no one has invented old women yet, but it seems like something worth trying" What she's saying is there is no figure in literature of the woman at the end of her career, the old woman, as a central figure, the protagonist. So she's reflecting on her career and what's going to follow her. She's not the end of her path, but she's getting towards it. We'll probably end with a question or a sideways note, because we don't know what comes next. But the question is what's the next generation going to know about Ursula K. Le Guin, what does the future hold for this legacy? I don't have more specifics, but it has to do with her reflections on life and her career, without being too much of a funeral eulogy or anything like that. More light hearted I hope.

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Disco's Out...Murder's In! is "the true story of Frank the shank and LA's deadliest punk rock gang." When I first saw the initial press releases for this book, I was minorly intrigued. It boasts a couple of illustrations by Raymond Pettibon and a few one-liner "must reads" by band members of the era. However, knowing some of the history behind LA's violent gang past, its indiscriminate violence and foolish over-bravado, I was reluctant to read it. I didn't think it would have much to offer in regards to the artistry or the people who made the DIY and creative aspects of the scene possible. I wondered if it would mostly just offer gratuitous violence while linking itself to punk nostalgia's steady market.

The book opens with a prologue that takes place after a funeral in LA. Frank "the shank" (free, of course), shows up to the wake of the deceased and engages the would-be authors in some storytelling about some homicidal adventures he and the departed had together "back-in-the-day." The authors give Frank a ride home and, after hearing more horrifying tales from this "legend," they decide to compile a book of his vignettes, telling the stories from Frank's early-teenage perspective, in his early teenage voice (one of my biggest problems with this book). The authors spent the next five years meeting Frank after his shitty grave-digging shifts (ironically appropriate, yet disconnected from justice) at diners around LA, getting all of the oral history they could to help them form this text. In the prologue, a reader can easily be convinced that the book *does* contain the redemptive qualities mentioned herein—ones that make violence in art easier to digest; there's an ethic present. It states a purpose: "don't waste your youth." There is a quote I've read from Frank where he mentions knowing that he ruined the scene for so many people (not to mention the ones he physically murdered). So, on another hand, I though, maybe this would be more of an important book than I anticipated. Maybe it will be a call against violence in punk rock (maybe its most self-destructive manifestation) and lead some of the new kids down a more conscientious path. Ultimately, I was wrong in giving it that much credit.

I'll just say it: This book *is* engaging, but I was sickened by its empty-hearted contemporary lack of growth. It is extremely violent in its described acts; I expected that. It was hard to put down, yet I was thrilled to be done with it. It inspired me to write this review. It is beyond terribly biased. It is one anecdote after another that tries to out-do its predecessor in gleaming nihilism and outright terroristic brutality. Deciding to narrate the book in Frank's teenage voice creates a tone that all of the hate, misogyny, chauvinism, rape culture, woman shaming, useless murder, braggadocio, drooging, gooning, and posturing is OK.

For example, at one point, having been cheated on by a womyn, Frank declares, "That cunt actress slut, hope she gets gang-raped and set on fire." Now, this is *exactly* what I'm talking about. This comment is representative of something that doesn't need to be included in the retelling to make it effective whatsoever. It's designed for marketing and promoting a certain mentality by character development, and fuck that ridiculously bigoted and idiotic mentality.

The stories are loosely connected, weaving together characters that many of us have known embodied in our own lives as abused, misdirected, young people who head down a deleterious path. This book tells each story of ultra-violence like it was the fun party to be at, like the victims always deserved the depths of contempt and fates that they received, that all the murders were justified, that the blind eyes towards rape were funny, and other types of apathetic, nihilistic white male privilege bullshit. Frank's narrative voice could be argued to be necessary for effect, for sales, for ease in storytelling. I would argue that if this were purely the case, the book wouldn't need to glorify and celebrate such foolishness in the modern narrative voice.

By the end of the book, Frank has gotten himself into so much trouble by being complicit with actual, deep-rooted mob-mixed gang life in LA that we think he may not get away with it anymore. However, the book's denouement is extremely rapid (like they ran out of stories). Frank is let off through an old favor from a family mob connection, and he goes completely free. Like absolutely free. Free enough to sulk around about how he messed up *his* life. Even in the deaths of his adult contemporaries, he can feel sad, feel sorry, and utilize the privilege to make a fucking book about it so maybe he can someday get a royalty check and dig fewer graves.

I admittedly enjoy reading works of literature that are laced with controversy and violence. They could be from nearly any background or genre, but something about the tension and edginess of violence keeps my eyes glued to the paper. This is not for love of violence or lack of experience with its barbarism, but more of the bored kid in me that still searches out excitement and danger as entertainment, especially if it is vicarious (one of the reasons crime novels have always been popular). Conversely, there's some kind of challenge that lies within the ability to digest disturbing information, especially true stories, and be able to learn something from them, without basking in the glorification of sociopath-ology, without *only* reading such pieces to read about the suffering of others. One of the main aspects of not basking in this glorification or gratuitousness is whether or not the work that you're reading has an aspect of redemption, a quality that speaks to learning from mistakes, making progress, overcoming personal demons, and even making amends. This is one of the things that makes the Marquis de Sade so disturbing; there's very little, if any, redemptive quality.

Whether you're reading Iceberg Slim, Luis Rodriguez, Alice Bag, Lucy Parsons, or oral histories of burgeoning punk rock nostalgia, there can be violence involved and it doesn't *have* to be glorified negativity. Violence is violent, and in its retelling we can often learn things by reflecting on the myriad points of its impact, revolutionary or reactionary. However, if this mindful learning is not present, to certain readers these tales can come off as prideful "glory days," or can be just plain numbing to the humanity of the victims therein. Despite the sarcastic nature of many things declared "punk," punk itself has a very complex history filled with many voices; and some of the most silent and / or muted voices have sometimes been the least accepted by the mainstream status quo because they call out the bullshit, they bring marginalized voices closer to the center issue, and prove that it hasn't always been a white-boy, nihilistic idiot, jock party that so many modern nostalgics in their youth, looking up to the commodified culture of "old school punk," get confused with.

It's obvious that much of the oral history on punk is tightly controlled by those who put it together. Many first wave era people of color and LGBTQ+ folks are left out of these histories. Where they do show up, their voices have been severely limited. People can argue the reasons why. Bigotry is an obvious one; it makes people benign and inflatingly elitist. The full story of punk rock is impossible to tell, so it comes in these small pieces. This story only marginally includes any details regarding the artistry or music of the time and setting, despite its time and setting. There's an allusion to a Channel 3 song while acquiring a gun to commit murder. Reading works that market themselves as connected to creative movements but do more to prove themselves as faux-*Clockwork Orange* allusions only prove for so much enlightening reading.

Disco's Out...Murder's In only continues to show that some of the most archetypical "punks" wearing the uniforms described within are and have been some of the largest contributors to the movement's hypocrisy and vicious cycles of negativity. Ideally, the future could beautifully prove, ultimately, that *this book's* target market is shrinking, dying, or at least becoming more conscientious than Frank the Shank. Unfortunately, it really is *that* shallow.

—Robert Knife

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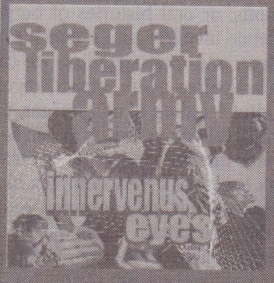

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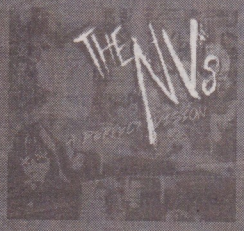

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"If it's going to kill me, I don't want it to bore me."

In the 1970s Wilko Johnson was the guitarist for the British band Dr. Feelgood. Though he probably may now be better known as Ser Ilyn Payne on television show **Game of Thrones**. In 2013 Johnson was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. **The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson** is a documentary of him as he deals with his illness and the prognosis that he has ten months to live.

The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson allows Johnson to espouse on many things that come to his mind while discussing his predicament. He quotes William Blake and William Shakespeare. He talks about deciding to not do chemotherapy. His argument is that he feels pretty good and chemo makes you feel bad so why should he spend his last days feeling bad. It is hard to refute. I hope when my day comes I will be able to do the same.

Since someone discussing his cancer is not particularly a visual thing, even with Johnson's jagged stare, director Julien Temple incorporates more than his usual amount of clips of silent, classic, and cult films. The clips are entertaining, but you do find yourself getting caught up in "what film is that?", "I need to see that one!", etc. instead of focusing solely on the subject at hand. Though Johnson doesn't focus either, so perhaps it is fitting.

There is not much discussion of Johnson's musical career. Fortunately, Temple also made an excellent documentary about Dr. Feelgood called **Oil City Confidential** so anyone who is unfamiliar with Johnson's musical legacy can easily get up to speed.

When Johnson learned he had ten months to live he went to Japan. While there he played to an enthusiastic crowd. Fans wrote him letters to take back to England. Roger Daltrey appears in **The Ecstasy Of Wilko Johnson** to discuss the record he and Johnson made in 2014 *Going Back Home*. The two also performed some shows together. Johnson joked that his guitar was resting on this tumor. Daltrey responded by naming the tumor Henry.

Most amazing is the story of Johnson's recovery. When he was playing one of his farewell shows a doctor in the audience, Dr. Charlie Chan, found it odd that Johnson had so much energy for a man with pancreatic cancer. After looking at Johnson's medical record, Chan determined it was a less common type that is treatable. Chan referred Johnson to another doctor who removed the cancerous tumor. Now Johnson is cancer-free. While the majority of the film was Johnson expressing a positive outlook and trying to enjoy his last days, the end has him confused at his return to his pre-cancer negativity. It was the perfect contradiction for Wilko Johnson. (ecstasyofwilkojohnson.com

I am not ready for '90s nostalgia. I lived through it, yet when I see what people are focusing on from the decade it seems like I didn't. **Kill Your Friends** is the story of a record company looking to find the next big hit. It is set in 1997 after the alternative rock boom when the music world seems like it was moving toward dance music. One of the early signings of Steven Stelfox, an A&R man who will do anything to get ahead, is a German producer whose song is "Suck My Dick." There are constant jokes that no one wants to listen to indie rock and other knocks at artistry and sincerity.

Portraits of record company jerks are always so tedious. This one is exceptionally so since it is also trying to be edgy. Stelfox and his cohorts drink and do drugs while claiming they hate music. There is murder and blackmail. Perhaps a better soundtrack could have helped. Though I doubt it.

A funny side note is that **Game Of Thrones** actor Joseph Mawle AKA Benjen Stark plays one of the main characters in **Kill Your Friends**. (Just to keep with one of this month's column themes.)

I had **The Art Of Conflict** sitting in my "to watch" pile for a few years. I am unsure of why I could never get myself to watch it, but I finally did. The film looks at the history of conflict in Northern Ireland known as The Troubles as seen through the cities' murals.

The murals serve as a commentary to residents. That is one of the most interesting aspects. The murals were not painted for outsiders, but for the people who live in the cities to give perspectives on what was happening. The murals started going to up to commemorate events and tragedies, to proclaim allegiances and to tell history. Even while the story of The Troubles is very depressing and the levels of violence and intimidation are daunting, the murals are strikingly beautiful.

You do not come to a documentary like **The Art Of Conflict** to understand the subtleties of the reasoning behind The Troubles. I know it is way more complicated than presented here. However, the film does try to set up a basic understanding. It would be difficult to view the murals without that. What comes across is the notion that people's voices need to be heard and they will tell their stories whatever way they can.

As the film ends, some of the more confrontational murals are being painted over with less political subjects. Seeing a sports figure replace a piece of history seems wrong. Yet, I also can't imagine having to walk by a two-story man holding an automatic weapon every day,

After delving into the depths of Irish political conflict it was time to hit **The Irish Pub**. **The Irish Pub** is a lighthearted documentary interviewing proprietors and patrons of pubs in Southern Ireland. Each pub has a story to tell and I enjoy hearing them all.

Each pub in **The Irish Pub** is a unique place with lots of personality so after watching **The Irish Pub** I wanted to visit every place shown. It is an excellent way to promote tourism. If anyone is planning on touring Irish Pubs let me know. Perhaps I'll tag along and maybe we could see some murals while we're at it.

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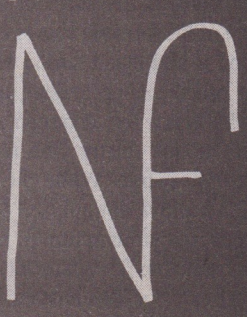

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ADOLESCENTS – "Manifest Destiny" CD

The latest from these Southern California punk vets. I haven't kept up with these guys recording-wise because some of their import releases are hard to track down. Their debut album is one of my all-time favorite punk releases. No Royer or Agnew sounding songs here though. These guys do an up-tempo rocking thing here à la TURBONEGRO and '90s BAD RELIGION. Steve and Tony are still doing it from their early '80s heyday and Tony still has a great punk voice and is still cranking out the cynical lyrics. I'll be prepared for these songs next time they come through town. (RL)
(Concrete Jungle)

ALIENATION – "2016" EP

Mind = blown. The 12" was good, but the unrelenting power of these eleven tracks is fukkn unparalleled. Piercing maximum speed hardcore teetering on complete collapse from the first burst…and then they drop that *tupa-tupa* for just a few seconds and if you're not moshing, then you're posing. Vocals echoed to forever, a production that's somewhere between Finland '82 and feisty garage punk… and riffs. I cannot emphasis this enough: ALIENATION got fukkn riffs for days. These Nova Scotia freeks just drop banger after banger, not even human. A mandatory get if you like your hardcore fast and weird. (WN)
(Warthog Speak)

ANARKIA – "Censurado" EP

Another month, another killer obscurity given the vinyl treatment. ANARKIA were the hardcore punk side project of Chilean metal band ATOMIC AGGRESSOR, but you'd never know it as this 1987 demo recording is refreshingly free of metal influence. Most of it is solid, mid-tempo hardcore à la OLHO SECO or G3, with occasional flourishes of straight-up punk (and even a tinge of rockabilly in their theme song). Like a lot of late '80s recordings there's a throwaway joke track, but everything else is pretty good, and the closing track ("Elección O Corrupción") is legitimately great, with some excellent melodic back-ups supporting the gravel-throated lead vocals and a short, frantic solo that ends the track perfectly. The very nice packaging includes a band history, lots of photos and an extra sheet translated lyrics, numbered out of 500 total copies. Great reissue! (AU)
(Rock SVB Discos)

ANNO SENZA ESTATE – "MMXVI" EP

Eleven songs, no breaks (well, you will have to turn the record over). This is punk rock in a very, rock way, almost garage like but a little too heavy, a little too punk. It's up-tempo, and outside of the couple little hooks, every thing is played pretty straight. Vocals are a bit of a yelled singing style and work well with the more driving songs (by far their better stuff). Lyrics are in Italian but have been kindly translated on the record sleeve for English speakers. (PA)
(Punti Scena / 1332)

ANTITHOUGHT – "The Letdown" LP

ANTITHOUGHT aren't breaking any new ground, but they are way closer to mastering their genre than they have the right to be on their first full-length release. This is a studio album that feels like hearing the live show, and it's hectic and sweaty. Kyle Valdes on lead vocals is the biggest asset to this group, whether he's magically throwing more syllables than seem possible into his timing (see "You Have to Be Asleep to Believe It," especially the lyric "*College graduates are working at McFatFuckland*"), slowly and deliberately delivering each word ("Fuck Minimum Wage & Fuck Yuppie Fucks!"), or almost barking ("American Scum"). *The Letdown* is a very good hardcore record and hopefully the precursor to some great ones. (RH)
(Collision Course)

ANXIETY – LP

Where do you start with ANXIETY? This record is the real deal, already edging its way to the top of my 2016 list. It's not that every element is on point here; everything is completely and gloriously unorthodox in approach and furious in delivery. The vocals here pivot between unhinged lunatic howling to wine-drunk stage whisper, truly fucked up and vitriolic throughout. The guitars squall and scream with feedback at all the right points, but it's probably most unnerving when they sound either clean and present or tinny and distant, like a fly buzzing around lost in the bedroom at 3:00 AM. The way the guitar lines hover over a song like "The Worst" as a noise and percussion element is just great, keeping an eerie presence lingering over an otherwise anthemic track. The lyrics scrutinize that narrow line that separates routine banality from the obscenity and violence that loom over the edge of daily life. "Trapped Shut," for instance, narrates that crawl into a stranger's car at the end of the night, building up from a "Human Certainty"-style dirge to a whiplash-inducing finish in the style of SIEGE or something. If you've ever let figuring out the right

water temperature in the shower or delays in your commute remind you of your confinement in the body prison, this one's for you. The record closes out with a longer track that sounds like THROBBING GRISTLE, which isn't that surprising for a hardcore band in this particular decade. What is surprising is that I like it, a lot. A+, essential. (EW)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

BIG JOANIE – "Crooked Room" EP

The guitar is spindly, creeping along a clean bass and minimalist drums. The vocals are either spoken or crooned. The songs are repetitive and have at max two parts, and really, all the best songs have one to three parts and no more. With that in mind, it sounds like they have taken one measure of the quiet build parts from post-rock, like they took one SLINT riff and stretched it into an entire song. There's also a cover of a TLC hit that they drag into a post-punk call and response lens. (MM)
(Sistah Punk)

BIG MESS – "You Know I Care" LP

Kids from Copenhagen seem to do a good job at whatever musical style they turn their hands to, and BIG MESS are no exception. Their sound of choice is rough-hewn pop punk with a "modern retro" garage edge. In other words, imagine if JAY REATARD had been heavily influenced by early (pre-*Unfun*) JAWBREAKER. I suspect they may have tapped a vein that's ready to burst. (AM)
(Big Happy)

BLACKBALL – "Visions of the Third Eye Undone" EP

I think this band is outta Greensboro. I mention that because I rolled through there last summer and played a gig at someone's house. It was really sick, but after listening to this 7" I wish I could go back in time and have BLACKBALL play the show. They remind me of more current bands like COMBAT KNIFE or BLOOD PRESSURE, but with the *boom-bap* 1-2 drum beat that PURE DISGUST uses on a grip of their tracks. This is another sick hardcore record coming out at a time where I feel like the hardcore scene is at its strongest in the USA. Sorry State never really disappoints. For fans of: Ben & Jerry's, Sperry's, awkward silences on long family vacations. (MW)
(Sorry State)

BLACK PANTIES – "Dead and Gone" LP

Is this a novelty record? That may be a stupid question to ask about something on the Lumpy imprint, but when the production values are this high for a band that wears costumes you have to ask yourself these questions. The cover is a glossy double-exposure of the man in the gimp mask fronting this band, and the recording quality is highly legible throughout. "*How can I make an impact / when I'm trapped in your format?*" ask PANTIES on one of this record's better bangers. I guess this allows space for some cool directions; the guitar tone and overall groove of "Made Out of Bugs" sounds like something out of the deep cut catalog of SIMPLY SAUCER before cutting to the Midwest punk stomp *du jour* in the choruses. "Cute" and "NMA" cut to some guitar breaks that sound a little pop punk and that I personally was not really feeling. You gotta stretch out I suppose, but the whole package never really adds up. He rhymes "cunts" with "punks," on "I Don't Care About the Punx," questionable poesis on a couple counts. Not too many of the riffs stick to your gut, but there is a compelling case built on this LP to layer up in all black and catch this band under the hot Missouri sun. Overall it's a kind of annoying record. Mission accomplished? (EW)
(Lumpy)

BLAZING EYE – "Brain/Lonely Corpse"

LA's rawest return with two more tracks of their signature Japanese-influenced fury. "Lonely Corpse" is the star of the single, a remarkably catchy 1-2 riff performed at a marching pace with a haunting lyric delivered in the style of TETSU-ARREI's Butaman. "Brain" isn't as immediately memorable, but it's still a great example of BLAZING EYE's style, a bit more up-tempo and scuzzy than the flip. Bonus points for the excellent graphic design (which is always on point with this band)—no computer interface is apparent, and it could easily be mistaken for a lost classic of the '80s. (AU)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

BSB – "The End Is Near" EP

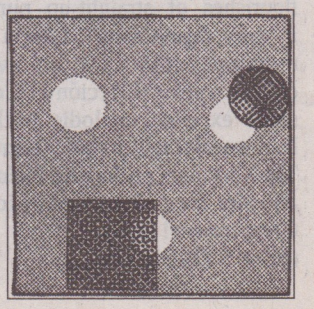
Very modern-sounding Polish hardcore with some blazing guitar solos and melodic overtones. This has an interesting mix of influences, combining the introspective lyrics and vocal delivery of a posi straightedge band with those wild crossover leads and moments of minor key heaviness that recall epic crust in the TRAGEDY style. It's not exactly my preferred style (too clean and "pro"-sounding), but I can imagine that this would appeal to a pretty broad range of punks if they had a chance to check it out. (AU)
(Black Wednesday)

BURNT BOOKS – "Where There's Smoke There's Fire" LP

Hatefully slow and terse math-core filled with a self-loathing sound and fragmented passages, melancholic eulogies to traditional hardcore. The compositions are intense and at times disjointed while the dual vocals are nails that close its coffin. The ideas are dangerous, while the delivery is careful. Cult-driven and tribal post-hardcore with an eccentricity that is very emotional, more than it is social or political. It becomes repetitive for me, though, and I just don't get the creativity that I imagine would be captivating live. (JR)
(Retro Futurist)

CANDY AND THE STRIPES – "In Sugar We Trust" LP

If you read *MRR* much, you've probably figured out that I'm the power pop guy. I'm also the pop punk guy. Sometimes I like being this guy, sometimes not. When a record titled *In Sugar We Trust* by a band named CANDY AND THE STRIPES comes along, there's almost no question who will be reviewing that record. These names and titles are so cliché, that it's almost too much, even for me. Fuck. The note that came with it warns that they play "pop punk about cats and candy." The insanity continues with the song titles. I may have finally hit rock bottom. I'm actually not sure I'd call this pop punk; I think it's more pure pop. It's mid-tempo and super catchy



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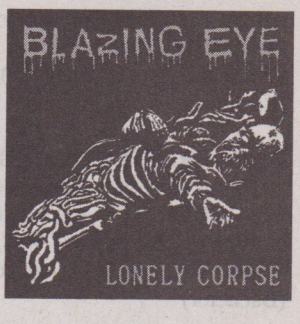


and it's so bare bones that it's actually quite good. Scratchy guitar, bass, drum kit, and vocals. It's nicely mixed without at all being over-produced. It reminds me of the early Subway stuff, like the FLATMATES. (KK)
(self-released)

CAPTAIN 9'S & THE KNICKERBOCKER TRIO – "Starting a Rock-N-Roll Grease Fire" LP

CAPTAIN 9'S & THE KNICKERBOCKER TRIO are at that interesting Rip Off Records intersection (they did have an LP on Rip Off in '95) you could call garage, pop punk, or just catchy rock'n'roll done the right way. It's adult men trying to get that naïve and basic brilliance only teenagers like the DONNAS can usually achieve, but they do grab me just that same way. Some tracks also get at that indecisive Midwest vibe that makes the GIZMOS' sound like they're a New Wave rock'n'roll band flirting with punk (it's a collection spanning many years, so some of the later tracks can also get borderline hardcore). These tracks are from '84–'94 out of somewhere in Pennsylvania, so it's easy to see them fitting into the *Bloodstains Across the Midwest* lineage. They cover KISS' "Rockin' Robin," and "Amazing Grace," so the influences don't scream "punk!" which I'm down with. There are two songs about starting fires. It's great. (BW)
(Rerun)

CATHOLIC GUILT – "Cabin Fever" EP

Four songs of post-punky hardcore from these Austrians. In guitar sound and melodic vocal delivery, it's kind of reminiscent of SACRED DENIAL, a band I think of as very underrated—maybe CATHOLIC GUILT are also. The songs here all have distinct variations and momentum. The apex for me is the first song, "Cold Feet." Like the cover art on this EP, it harkens back to Nick Blinko's work in possibly the best band of all time, RUDIMENTARY PENI. The other songs have a bit more HÜSKER DÜ influence with a lot of drive and melody. This EP is sly in its depth. It's not made for cheap kicks. It's filled with undercurrent and motion. The instruments are all played with precision and aim. This is just really good and I can see people who come from very different perspectives liking it for completely different reasons. Put in a lyric sheet and you have a 10/10. (WK)
(Kim)

CAUCASOID – "Isn't She Cute?" EP

Six new shits direct from Anus, infamous OUT WITH A BANG and GRABBIES degenerate ripper. Not sure if I prefer the actual record over the unplugged solo renditions I was treated to last year, but when aiming this low, you can only impress. The sentiment behind "Isn't She Cute?" is anti-infant, which is great because obviously all children are terrible. That's actually the cheeriest tune of the lot, as CAUCASOID revel in ruining your day, hoping for your death, and broadcasting their stupidity to fellow shitheads. It's exactly the sort of low-IQ classique punk horseshit you've come to expect. For assholes and losers only (that means you). (MC)
(My Mind's Eye)

C4 SERVICE – "Un/Stable" 12"

Driving, anthemic hardcore drawing from metallic late '80s USHC (the POISON IDEA reference dropped in the promo kit is, for once, relatively on point) and the more melodic guitars that dominated the early/mid '90s. Strained and powerful female vocals, with lyrics addressing politics mostly from a personal standpoint. Solid on the first listen, and I'm guessing even better upon subsequent spins. (WN)
(Powder Shed)

CHANDELI'ERS – "Breaker" LP

Sure you have MINOR THREAT records in your collection, but honestly you can't remember the last time you intentionally listened to them. When you're driving around or sitting in your backyard, you're probably a 1000 time more likely to rock some BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN than any of those SUBHUMANS albums you have. You still love the spirit of punk, but find yourself increasingly choosing to listen to rock, blues, country, and oldies instead. Am I sort of describing you? It's okay. There have been a million aging punks that have gone through this, and there will be a million more after you. But lucky for you, you have reached the perfect time in your life to truly enjoy bands like CHANDERLI'ERS. They have the spirit of punk, but their tunes sound more like your favorite ELVIS COSTELLO album. They play catchy ass songs about love, hope, and daydreams. They could be on the radio or playing in a punk house basement. Both seem fitting. (FS)
(Dead Broke / Dirt Cult)

CHEATER SLICKS – "On Your Knees" LP

This debut record from these now-institutional garage-psych pounders suffered from an abortive initial release. In 1989 this record was slotted into the noise rock genre/ghetto that was "dominating the charts baby," and was lumped in with bands like PUSSY GALORE, TAD, VERTIGO, BASTARDS, etc. I know this because I was one of those "slotters," which wasn't *totally* unfair but it kind of cut them off from the folks that would have appreciated the record more fully: the garage-punker scene that was taking shape right at that time, which really informs this disc more than New York scum rock or AmRep does. It also didn't help that most of the pressing was badly warped as well, so stores would not stock it. Fuck it. Treat this re-release as the long-delayed proper issue of their first record. People who, uh, grew up listening to "Don't Like You" or "Walk Into The Sea" may find the sheet-metal sonics on this a bit overwhelming, but you'll get used to it with repeat listens, just like every other record you thought was "eh" on first listen that eventually became one of your favorites. (RW)
(Almost Ready)

CHROME REVERSE – "You Say You Love Me…" EP

Sophomore EP from this dynamite French act, boasting not one but two actual NO-TALENTS in their ranks, including the absolute ruler known as Lili Z. CHROME REVERSE is decidedly retro garage beat, devoid of the smirking punk that I expected, but not a deal-breaker in the slightest. In fact, the sound is all eerily reminiscent of many

BILLY CHILDISH productions (this could easily fit on *Hangman's Daughter*!), making this all timeless rock'n'roll, especially if you love spazzing (who doesn't?). (MC)
(Bachelor)

OS COURETTES – "Introducing the Selvagem Os Courettes" 45

This is fantastic. Two super catchy '90s style garage rock tunes. OS COURETTES are a two-piece that bash out their songs fast and frantic. Plus this 7" was recorded at ToeRag Studios with Liam Watson so the sound is perfect. I love it. (CK)
(Bachelor)

CRAZY BAG LADY – "Hunks" LP

Although they are now operating under the totally inferior moniker CRAZY BAGS, these Georgia punks seem to perfectly nail the slower, softer axis of all those peripheral bands related to MARKED MEN. I'd list them all, but you've already shaved their names into your chest hair, so do the math. Seventeen pop tunes, all equally catchy and crunchy, all easily digestible. A smaller, grittier dose would've worked better for me, but I'm an asshole. (MC)
(Retro Futurist)

DAMAGED ONES – "The First Kiss" LP

Some bands try to pay homage to their forebears in musical style, and some in substance, but then again, some just completely miss the mark. This record is off target by a long shot. A record dedicated to BLACK FLAG, CIRCLE JERKS and the RAMONES in 2016... WTF? These guys look like middle-aged dudes who play hardcore, but the music reminds me of teenagers who never have had a chance to listen to any good band including the dedicatees mentioned above. The music has a few moments here and there, even if it is street punk mixed with the bad kind of hardcore. The amateurish recording (as digital as digital can be) and simplistic lyrics and song titles that are just plain dumb and corny don't help it much. Take "Anti-Social": "*I fuck your daughter and her mom, licking their pussies just for fun.*" Besides that being just about the most unintelligent sounding lyric ever, what does it have to do with being anti-social? That is just one of many misses. I know people put a lot of effort into making music and releasing records, but this is pretty much exactly what I hate in punk, very rhymed, very cliche, very poorly done. On the liner notes it says they will continue to play as long as kids are angry at society for all its ills, so let's clean that shit up fast. I hated this record by the third song but I still listened all the way through. I feel like I want my time back. (WK)
(New Age)

DEAD CAT LOUNGE / MOSQUITO TEETH – split EP

This is a labor-of-love split EP from two bands, released by stalwarts of the local scene. DEAD CAT LOUNGE play a bare-bones, fast hardcore punk, while MOSQUITO TEETH are snottier and a little more melodic, in the vein of early NOFX. The cover folds out into a poster and it comes with a sticker and a patch. Good stuff. (AM)
(No Clubs)

DEAD CULT – "Fall" LP

Unadulterated throwback post-punk of the goth variety, channeling SKELETAL FAMILY. Ten tracks of well-executed SIOUXSIE style vocals and spellbinding musical accompaniments. Insert includes all the lyrics, which carry a poetic rhyme scheme and are worth the read. If you like CRIMSON SCARLET and ARCTIC FLOWERS, this will be up your alley for sure. (LT)
(Doomed to Extinction)

DEAFNESS BY NOISE – "A Long Way Down" CD

Croatian hardcore veterans DEAFNESS BY NOISE have been blasting for 25 years now. This CD is a nice mixture of what sounds like New York Hardcore, MOTÖRHEAD-worship, punk rock and metal. I think I heard Roger Miret on one of the tracks or at least that's what it sounds like—there's a definite resemblance to newer AGNOSTIC FRONT, SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, and SICK OF IT ALL. Powerful tunes with heavy guitars and pissed-off tough vocals. Some of the songs are more on the punk rock/Oi! side but that's kind of what makes this album stand out for me. That and the track "A Tribute To A Friend," which is a tribute to the late Onno Cromag. Lots of badass songs on this one! (DB)
(Strength)

DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"

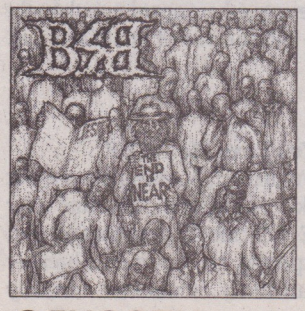
"Tracers" is a *good song* from 1982 with the AGNEW brothers on guitar and bass, never actually issued as a standalone record before but collected on *Killed by Death 13*, I guess. This is actually an extremely excellent A-side and all punks with leather jackets and berets should buy it or join the Skoptzy in Russia and eliminate all your organs that are able to sense the world or feel pleasure. (BB)
(Elective Affinities / Negative Jazz)

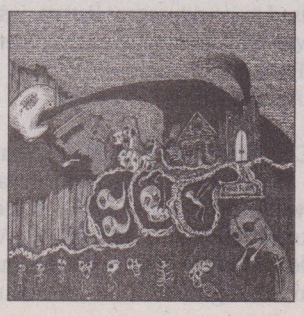
DER STAB – "Tracers/It's Grey"

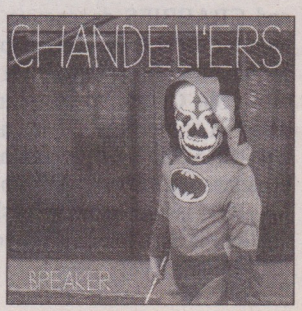
A snotty Orange County goth/punk artifact that collapsed before it happened, and was reanimated with the addition of the Agnew brothers in 1982 for the purpose of recorded posterity. This band was comped on *KBD 13* (one of my top wants! Why won't the denizens of Hell, Norway, reissue this volume??), but the rest of the recordings were thought missing. On the evidence of this 45 it's a cool representation of a particular scene / sound, but also sorta heard one / heard 'em all. I enjoy and endorse the early works of Rikk Agnew and mail ordered this 45 when I heard of its existence, but it's probably not a truly essential thing for non-maniac types? "Tracers" is the hit, will make you crash your car into the Matterhorn. (LG)
(Elective Affinities / Negative Jazz)

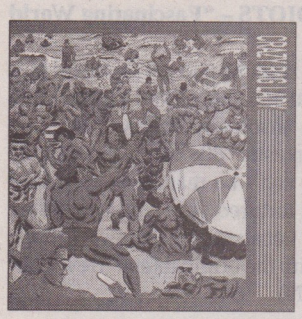
DESPERDICIO – "El Nuevo Mundo/Da Gritos" flexi

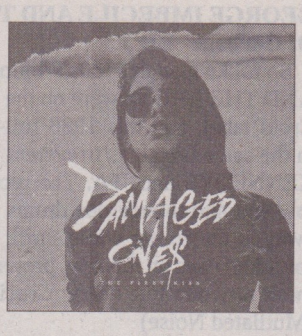
Japan's greatest (only?) purveyors of DISCHARGE '81 via Spain '83 offer up two killer tracks of ultra-simple one-riff MG-15 worship on this floppy platter. The title track is a straightforward D-beat banger, while "Da Gritos!" is a bit more of a rocking sing-along track, with a riff that features a uniquely Japanese ascending flourish and a super-catchy chorus. Their first EP was pretty good, but these songs are much better. Nice, simple, and good-looking design to the flexi

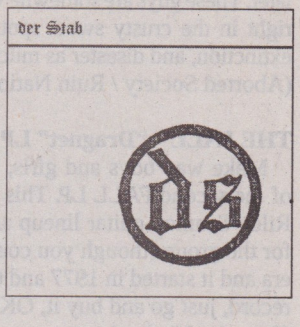












and cover art, it's unfortunate that the text on the quarter-size back of the sleeve is so pixelated as to be virtually unreadable. (AU)
(Doomed To Extinction)

THE DESTRUCTORS – "The Somme" CD

46 minutes of butt punk / hard rock that sounds like CKY or something else at home on a Bam Margera TV show. The whole thing is a fifteen-track concept album about World War I that includes covers that fit that theme by the JAM, MOTÖRHEAD, and a bizarre take on EDWIN STARR's "War" (*War / what is it good for? / absolutely nothing)* that makes me think SPINAL TAP. Writing songs about the tragedies of war isn't new and World War I is pretty far removed from our experiences today, but the lyrics on this album do a surprisingly good job of painting the picture of how sad something like war is. Just don't ask me to listen to it again. (BW)
(Rowdy Farrago)

DILUTION – EP

All fucking music symbols crossed the fuck out! Get ready for a filthy, uncompromising, Italian, grindcore pummeling. These guys have no time for grooves or melody. Growling, screaming, and smashing is the only way. Like UNHOLY GRAVE or even REPULSION. Some people might not think we need another band like this, but if you like Blleeeeaaauuurrrrgghhh! comps, skitching lifted pick-up trucks, or vegan pork rinds, then this one is for you. (BA)
(Aima / Attention Deficit Grindcore Disorder / Bad Feeling / Dead Rasputin Productions / 83 / Eatshitbuydie / Get Pissed Stay Pissed / Nuts Tape / Pan De Muerte / Rebound Action)

DIRECT HIT – "Wasted Mind" CD

Newly signed to Fat Records, I hope these guys can break out of the pop punk fest subculture. One of the best new pop punk bands around with a catchy but sometimes reckless approach. Shades of DILLINGER FOUR, COPYRIGHTS, and even moving towards the slickness of BLINK 182 and the TRAVOLTAS at times on this full-length. These guys are great live and on their recordings. Killer stuff! (RL)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

DISCUNT / INTERNT OPPGJØR – split EP

DISCUNT remind me of early '90s Bay Area snotty filthy punk (think FILTH/BLATZ split). Multiple vocals, catchy, bouncy track delivered with complete disregard for melody, even though they are packed with hooks. INTERNT OPPGJØR are really just a slightly more ferocious version of the same animal, with a subtle metal tinge and untamed guitars doing all kinds of wild style deep in the mix. This whole record feels like a time warp in the best possible way. Both bands from Oslo, and both bands are killer. (WN)
(Byllepest Distro)

THE DUIS – "Nightcap" EP

Anthemic drunk punk with gruff vocals. More than a few RANCID moments. Just meat'n'taters hard driving punk rock—nothing more, nothing less. (WN)
(self-released)

EFIALTIS – "Efialtis" EP

Four tracks of pummeling mid-tempo London punk reflecting a strong Greek heritage (and/or Greek fetish). Both bare bones and captivating, the songs seem like they are building up to something. Ominous and craggy riffs, vocal inflections that are spot on, and drums plodding along seem to warn the listener of a troubling event on the horizon (Brexit?). Refreshing, yet familiar, I find their sound rooted firmly in a Continental punk tradition. Particularly, I'm reminded of the stripped down Barcelona punk sound of DESECHABLES invoked by CHROMA, as well as DIABLESSE GRUP 6 and POST REGIMENT. I recommend the record, and I'm very interested to see them live. (LT)
(Static Shock)

EFIALTIS – "Κολοσσιαίο Γυναικείο Κεφάλι" EP

Dirgy, primitive, and stomping sounds from London. Greek-sung punk typically has a very distinct sound that's hard to compare to anything else. It's commanding, loaded with syllables, and...well, Greek. Some people dislike it, I think it's awesome. The opening track grew into an anthemic hit after repeated listens (with a well-placed scream in the middle), but sonically speaking, the music on this platter falls a little flat for me overall. The record looks cool as shit though. (MA)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

MIKEY ERG – "Tentative Decisions" CD

Mikey from the ERGS and the UNLOVABLES (to name a couple of his many bands) is a music head and this debut solo album shows that in its variety. There's some pop punk of course, but also some '90s alt rock à la the LEMONHEADS and HOLE. I'm even hearing a little MY BLOODY VALENTINE on the closing track. There's a lot to take in here and repeated listening may be needed to really absorb it. I'm digging this and the mix of songs a lot. (RL)
(Don Giovanni)

THE EXSENADORS – "Kamatayan O Kalayaan?" EP

These Filipino punks offer up six tracks of Oi!-tinged hardcore with a definite late '80s Lower East Side influence. Simple riffs collide with super-charged solos, stomping breakdowns and motor-mouthed vocals. Just when you're thinking WARZONE, they bust out a melodic punk rager like "Fantaserye Ng Kapulisan" that owes more to G.I. AND THE IDIOTS than any shaven-headed New York lunkhead. "The Real Strength" is a definite highlight, featuring tough gang vocals, a catchy central riff and a gloriously rocked-out solo. The sneakily-building mosh part and excellent use of samples in "Panginoong Maylupa" deserve a shout out as well. This is a fucking tight record from an often-overlooked scene that's well worth checking out. (AU)
(Mutilated Noise)

EXTINCTEXIST – "Cursed Earth" LP

Youngsters take note: if you want to do the crust thing, this is how you get down! Sounds like waking up in a vomit ridden crust squat somewhere in Europe in the '80s, or maybe Minneapolis a few years

later. These guys are somewhere between SKITSYSTEM and VENOM, right in the crusty sweet spot if you ask me. If you like pestilence, extinction, and disaster as much as I do, snatch this up. (BA)
(Aborted Society / Ruin Nation)

THE FALL – "Dragnet" LP

Make way boys and girls, for the plush Superior Viaduct reissue of the second FALL LP. This is the long-playing debut of the famed Riley-Scanlon guitar lineup and is widely recognized as a prime era for the group (though you could argue they have only had one prime era and it started in 1977 and they're still in it). If you don't have this record, just go and buy it, OK? (AM)
(Superior Viaduct)

THE FALL – "Live at the Witch Trials" LP

First studio album from the FALL, and in a band with a daunting discography it's a better place to start than most. All members of the band had quit in the time between recording and its release, leaving only the inimitable Mark E. Smith and portending both the tumultuous social relations and the sonic repetition repetition repetition that were to come. This is a record in debt to the VELVETS and CAPTAIN BEEFHEART, led by keyboards and replete with the bum-notes of a intended five-day studio session cut down to one, the best kind of bum notes! Mark E. Smith condemns junkies, the social strata of the UK music scene, and just about everyone around him, his particular and enduring brand of elegant and poetic pure hatred emerging fully-formed from the start. What is there to say about one of the best records by such a singular band? "Pretty good." Buy it. (GA)
(Superior Viaduct)

FLANDERS72 – "Atomic" CD

This pop punk band from BRAZIL sounds a helluva lot like GREEN DAY. Mix in a little QUEERS and SCREECHING WEASEL. Pretty generic but they do a decent job of it. The vocalist needs to stop singing just like Billie Joe. (RL)
(Home Boy)

FLESHHEAD ATTACK – "Brain Parasite" LP

Fast and furious start / stop thrash punk. Heavy and vaguely metallic without entering The Cheese Zone, file this along side this better ACCÜSED recordings, but this shit is faster. Solid riffs, guitar flourishes (when appropriate) and vocals that are way up top. Surprisingly good jams hiding under a deceiving cartoony splatter punk/grind record cover. Recommended. (WN)
(Kopperation)

GAGGERS – "Don't Follow Me/1000 Miles Per Hour"

Surprisingly good femme-vox punker that veers into the power pop genre strictly by virtue that it's really well produced. Sounds like SoCal's LEGAL WEAPON in the best way possible. Wow, the 7" cover is super-cliché and I was primed to roll my eyes, but this is just fucking catchy. I wouldn't mind hearing this come out of the FM station in my rental car some day. (RW)
(Rapid Pulse)

GEORGE IMBECILE AND THE IDIOTS – "Fascinating World Of Garbage" LP

So fukkn glad this '80s Filipino stuff is starting to get reissued! G.I. AND THE IDIOTS were on the seminal and short-lived Twisted Red Cross label, and this 1986 full-length absolutely deserves mention in the same breath as irreverent and sarcastic '80s bands like DEAD KENNEDYS and JFA. The recording can't be matched—rumbling low end and thunderous drums with a tortured guitar just pounding away in the corner while shrill, snotty vocals run the show. Attitude for fukkn days on this one, presented with the original (and irreverent) insert artwork. File under: Crucial. (WN)
(Mutilated Noise)

GØGGS – LP

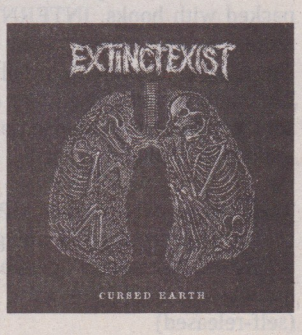
I liked the 45 and the last EX-CULT LP was one of my favorites, so I was waiting with baited breath for the arrival of this new volume from this so called supergroup featuring Chris from EX-CULT, TY SEGALL, and CHARLIE MOOTHEART. GØGGS has a sort of "Jungle Rot" GEORGE BRIGMAN feeling, thugged out proto-punk, sometimes veering more towards the rock than is my personal preference. But I am probably the lone person in the world that prefers TY SEGALL's garage era to his current psyche-rock dominance (same with CHARLIE MOOTHEART) and in places this LP definitely adheres more to that thick riff rock feel? Your feelings on this disc will probably be dependent on your feelings on this important issue. The good songs are fucking killer and maybe I would be more into this if it was a few 45s. That wailing dollar store guitar is where it should remain, falling apart is so much more appealing than true competency. (LG)
(In the Red)

HALLELUJAH! / HOLIDAY INN – split EP

HOLIDAY INN play bratty synth punk that's like a less complicated and more aggressive GERRY AND THE HOLOGRAMS, endless repetition, mass irritation sound. Like being trapped in an elevator at the airport and someone uses the opportunity to set up their synth and explain their cult's philosophy. HALLELUJAH! start out with a hardcore attack, really catchy and snotty, like their countrymen OUT WITH A BANG. The next song is a fly trapped in the room / one riff will do zammer. This is a killer 45. Italian devastation is real. (LG)
(Maple Death)

HEAVY METAL – "Anti-Music Anti-Sense Anti You" LP

A two-piece from the streets of Berlin demonstrating what is possible with a collection of obscure UKDIY 45s and a shifty mindset. Bashed out catchy snot that will make you turn to PCP and insurrection. I think this might be one of my records of the year?! Every song is a new dimension of some good kind of shitty punk, like bad versions of "Television Addict" and "No Nonsense" at the same time. Bored / on fire. If you like more professional ideals I will assert that the singer sounds like an acid freak street preacher version of the dude from EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING. The music is a perfect vision of cheap speed we all live for. This will give you the



shits and transform your murky soup of a brain into a vessel of truth and light. This is the future, the past, and the present. (LG)
(Static Age)

HELLS – "Paradise" CD

Paradise reeks through and through with angst. From some of the aesthetic choices, I'd guess HELLS is seeking to convey vibes of contempt and disgust, but something about the delivery just speaks to personal unhappiness. Perhaps that's the direction that mid-tempo hardcore bands are moving in now. I can see how HOAX could have kicked the trend that HELLS are part of in that direction. In terms of production, everything sounds nice and thick, and the snare drum is truly punishing. Like, I-can't-imagine-trying-to-listen-to-this-on-headphones punishing, and that's pretty awesome. The last track is both the most interesting moment and the greatest letdown. The song starts off with enough monotonous chugging on one chord that I had to check my CD player to make sure it wasn't skipping, but then the singer came in singing, and all I could think of was the fact that there was some kind of nu-metal influence I hadn't seen until that point. (LP)
(Seeing Red)

HERO DISHONEST – "Liha Ja Teräs" LP

Yeah man! These manic Finnish speed freaks serve up a nice slab of quick, frenzied hardcore. Like VOID all tangled up in some Japanese thrash shit. It's dissident and chaotic, but the playing is solid as fuck. I was just about to take a nap, but after this one, fuck it! Thrash, panic, freak-out! Yeah man. (BA)
(Peterwalkee)

JJ DOLL – "You Come First" EP

I was instantly psyched on the demo yet this has taken a few spins to reach the same level of satisfaction, I am not sure why… A reconfigured IVY, with Sara singing in a most devastating manner. The line between calm and hysteria, burned out and wired, ready for a new version, somewhere between the COMES and DESTROY ALL MONSTERS in vocal style. The guitar/bass combo is burly with Ben's wild ramshackle drums preventing all rock-isms from forming. Shiva's guitar sound on this is really powerful in an *'82 Demos* manner which I am not sure is something he is informed by—so close to rock but not. This record has got a dirty streets of NYC feeling, tired of being looked at and getting fucked over, classic and brutalized. It sounds like she's sneering "*Crawl under the city streets I can't even see.*" Those lyrics are wrong but that is what this records feels like. (LG)
(Katorga Works)

KADOTETTU TULEVAISUUS – "Kenen Oikeus?" EP

Don't let the generic cover art deter you from checking out this totally capable Finnish hardcore offering. They're not so much in the traditional reckless thrashing Finnish style, but more tight and polished while still sounding convincingly angry and throwing some classy rhythmic surprises in the mix. Six solid tracks, and apparently their second release, following an EP from back in 1992! (MA)
(self-released)

KALEIDOSCOPE – "Vol. 2 No. 1" EP

Equal parts clattering DEAD C-style noise exploration, and virtuosic, grooving hardcore. Some of the most thrilling guitar playing in contemporary DIY punk, live or on record. New York's last and only hope in this age of pig surveillance culture. Highly recommended. (EW)
(Katorga Works)

JAMIE KILSTEIN & THE AGENDA – "A Bit Much" CD

Holy shit, this is hard to listen to! I immediately wanted to dismiss this as sheer garbage, but I did a little research and found out that this guy is a semi-famous comedian / political commentary dude, which gives this recording a tiny bit of merit, I must admit. Half sung, half jabbered political comedy and rants over some of the most absolute worst garbage rock I've heard in a long, long time. I'm sure the bad music is supposed to be part of the joke, but fuck me, it's awful. Worse than KING MISSILE at their shittiest. Some of his jokes and rants are pretty funny though. Seriously. (DZ)
(Don Giovanni)

KNOW SECRETS – "At Rise" LP

Despite making a claim that KNOW SECRETS is a "community-based" band, it's essentially one guy. Namely, that guy is Eric Urbach, and he writes, with the help of his friends, songs that sound like an even poppier version of COMADRE's last album (minus the dance-y beats) and the FOO FIGHTERS. The nice thing about this collection of songs is that, since they were all written with different input tempering Mr. Urbach, the record as a whole has a enough variety to the songs to keep it interesting, while still sounding cohesive and unified. Unfortunately, none of these songs were catchy enough to jump out and stick with this reviewer, save for the sludgy number on the B-side, but that was just because it felt out of place alongside the more "alternative" fare. Except for that track the rest of the record is full of swaggering pop rock songs, all touching on hardcore and / or emo influences, but sticking almost entirely to the pop formula. (LP)
(301 Collective)

THE LAST DITCHES – "Split Milk" CD

What you need to know is that the LAST DITCHES are made up of Walter Lure (the HEARTBREAKERS' other guitarist) and Bobby Rondinelli (the drummer from RAINBOW / BLACK SABBATH / BLUE ÖYSTER CULT) plus two other New York musicians, Binky Philips and Randy Pratt. It's a curious pairing and while it works at times, the music mostly sounds like a '70s hard rock band that never made it. I'll be the first to give them props for what they've done in the past and that they're still doing it, but that doesn't really mean I need to hear any of more of this. Not to mention covering a HEARTBREAKERS' song just seems too desperate. Sorry guys. (CK)
(Hyperspace)

LOBOTOMIA – "Demo 1984" EP

Short, fast Brazilian hardcore punk. Forget what you know about this band's output, as these are straight bare bones HC creamers—

no bullshit, no metal, nothing but fierce determined '80s 'core. The eponymous "Lobotomia" is the only track here I was familiar with before this reissue—the recording has languished on a cassette comp for three damned decades! Like listening to a time warp, this record shows a legendary band at their most primitive (and, arguably, their most awesome). Excellent and welcome reissue. (WN)
(Nada Nada / Spicoli)

LOBOTOMIA – "Desastre" CD

Hopefully most *MRR* readers will already be familiar with the name, as LOBOTOMIA are legendary pioneers of the crossover scene, debuting with a demo in 1984 (recently reissued!), offering up two tracks to the classic *Ataque Sonoro* compilation in 1985, and dropping one of the most crucial Brazilian hardcore records of all time (*Lobotomia*) in 1987. The re-formed LOBOTOMIA haven't quite scaled the same heights as their earlier incarnation, but this is easily the best of their new millennium output. The clean, pro recording isn't too big a turn-off, showcasing the gnarly, NYHC-style vocals and SLAYER-inspired solos, while the drumming keeps things firmly rooted in punk territory, mixing the occasional D-beat into the speedy thrash 1-2s. There are melodic moments that don't quite work, but nothing here is flat-out bad by any means, and some of the riffs and mosh breaks are genuinely fantastic. (AU)
(Vinganca)

LOVESORES – "Rock and Roll Animal" 10"

LOVESORES from Portland, Oregon, feature the great vocals of Scott "Deluxe" Drake, formerly of the HUMPERS. The key to any great band is a distinct vocalist. Drake is one. As such LOVESORES sound a lot like the HUMPERS. The music is your basic early punk rock style—some JOHNNY THUNDERS-style guitar riffs mixed with the RAMONES. It sounds real good. Four songs on this 10" and I've listened to all of them at least a thousand time so far. Fun stuff. (CK)
(Hound Gawd!)

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS – "Huff My Sack" LP

The first actual album from Lumpy & Co. captures them at their boil-lancing best. Considering the amount of praise they've received from the jump, it's kinda cool that this doesn't take a severe step back quality-wise, and I say that knowing many are approaching their saturation point with this nowadays mutant punk sound. From the title track's toilet humor immediacy to the slithering closing of "Spider Bite," we get a prime dose of disgust via power, growl and humor that's uniquely their own. Gonna have to cite "Pee In The Pool" and "Blue Lives" as my mandatory moments here, but you've probably got thirteen spare minutes most days, so play the whole thing while you pick your scabs and enjoy life as human garbage. Yes, a winner. (MC)
(La Vida Es Un Mus / Lumpy)

MAD – "Mask" 12" picture disc

You're seriously reading a review to buy a MAD record. Put your fucking pants on already! Actually, you prolly don't even hafta wear pants to procure one of four different silkscreened versions of this three-songer of unreleased studio trax, including non-singles tracks "Mask" and "Devil," as well as "Eyeball" (albeit not as good as the single version). The MAD are legendary NYC '70s horror punk rawkers whose notorious gigs had tons of gushing blood and pyrotechnics, playing regularly with all the Bowery rats like BAD BRAINS and MISFITS. Check YouTube and you might even find some cable access footage. If there ever was a gateway drug to the whole *Killed By Death* genre, the MAD are surely it! Artwork inspired by the *Yes L.A.* comp, a one-sided three-track 12" on clear wax with two-color Screaming Mad George art. Presumably this is somewhat limited, so better get on it! (GB)
(Brain Transplant)

THE MAD DOCTORS / SUN VOYAGER – split 45

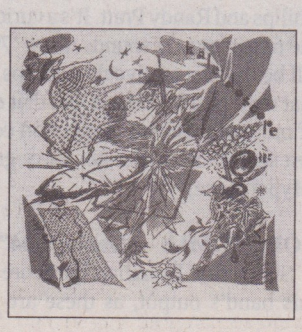
Fuzzy warriors from parts unknown do battle in thee garage. "Rusty Knife" is the offering from the MAD DOCTORS, stomping around in a mode immediately recalling grease-leaning punks from the dawn of this century (think the HARD FEELINGS and their ilk). SUN VOYAGER is charging in an entirely different direction though, channeling those same lite-psych biker rockisms that captivated many a carhole crusty in the early 2010s. Things are just OK after the dust settles. A near-triumph from both units, though no truly magic moments. (MC)
(King Pizza)

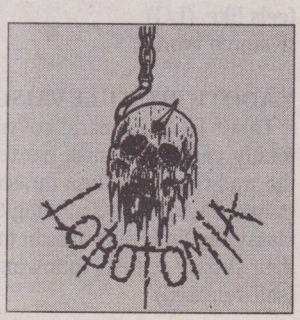
MARTHA – "Blisters In The Pit Of My Heart" LP

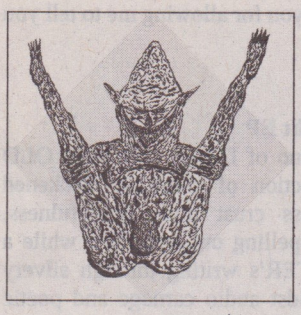
Everyone's favorite English vegan straightedge pop punk band have returned with a second LP. This is ultra catchy and fun punk for all you softies out there (you know who you are). Songs about love, friendship, self-discovery, and politics, all delivered with infectious smile-inducing harmonies. Their sound seamlessly flirts between bubblegum pop and power pop and never lets go. If you adore both RADIATOR HOSPITAL and the MUFFS, you will undoubtedly be into this. (FS)
(Dirtnap)

LONDON MAY – "Devilution: The Early Years" CD

London May is arguably best known for drumming in SAMHAIN and REPTILE HOUSE. This CD compiles bands that he played with from 1981-1993, so the only unifying factor is that he played drums on all of it. It starts off with some raw hardcore and punk tracks by RAT PATROL and REPTILE HOUSE before slipping a live SAMHAIN recording of "To Walk the Night." There are a couple of muddy live cuts from DAG NASTY too. From there on the CD delves into his late '80s and early '90s alternative rock bands like DISTORTED PONY, DEAD WHITE AND BLUE, and LUNCH BOX, as well as some guy who played with Dave Grohl a few times. It closes out with an *audition tape* for the 1992 line up of CIRCLE JERKS. It's just.... not good. London May includes *extensive* notes about each song on the album. There's an inexplicable introduction by Will Oldham in the liner notes where he reveals that the last time he saw London May was at the launch party for a perfume that Oldham himself created. Ooooooookay. (GH)
(Cleopatra)







METANOIA – "Chili-Nation" CD

METANOIA is a Christian punk (oxymoron?) band from Chile. They sound very influenced by '90s skate punk bands like MILLENCOLIN, MXPX, and the OFFSPRING. They definitely have a lot of soul and worked hard on making clean and polished-sounding "positive" punk rock. By positive I mean lyrics about staying in school, not doing drugs, and waiting for the girl of your dreams. Check it out if you like the bands mentioned above and if songs about Jesus don't make you gag. (DB)
(Thumper Punk)

MOMENT – "Thick and Unwieldy From All Our Layers: A Complete Discography" 2xLP

MOMENT hailed from Boston in the late '90s/early '00s. Now they exist in that void that came with being a band playing rented public halls for a small but dedicated group of kids before the internet really exploded the way it did in the latter half of the '00s. Unless you were actually in that scene, it is highly unlikely that you would now be aware of MOMENT or even be able to find much information on your own, but this discography is an awesome relic that acts as a guide to that time. The SUNDAY NETWORK, the BREAKUP, and HEADLINER (pre-HIT THE LIGHTS grossness) are all similar-sounding pop punk acts of the same era that, though influential in their own scenes, are now equally lost in history except to those who were there. If you ever scraped up all the change you could find to pay the $3 to see some touring band from Minnesota when they came through your Midwestern town in 2002, this double album is likely going to speak to you very personally. Give a quick listen to the title track and "Murder Murder," and you'll know right away if this is the nostalgia you've been looking for. (RH)
(All About / TLS / Tor Johnson)

MOSQUITO EGO – "Glomb" LP

The cover art is an insane Freudian Fort Thunder eyemelt, which aptly reflects the musical content. It's a wild skree of psyche-noise-goof off—they assert BRAINIAC and TERMINAL CHEESECAKE as their primary influences on the press sheet, but this has more of a MELT-BANANA / old school BOREDOMS playing B-52s covers playfulness to these ears?! With added German new wave feelings, perhaps because of those accents. Dense waves of keyboard, guitar and noise with multi-gendered vocalists wilding out over the top, there are attempts at the macho pigfuck prominent bass but they are transformed by their tendency towards strange BEEFHEART-ian girl group dada-isms. This is more anarchic and playful than any of the multiple modern pigfuck revivalists that come through the reviews. Definitely more art school warehouse band than "rawk." If you are a *PaperRad* fan check this out. (LG)
(ever/never)

MY NAME IS JOE – "Stories Of Our Cities" LP

MY NAME IS JOE singer/guitarist Tommy Strange has a voice that reminds me of San Francisco. Possibly because my first introduction to Mr. Strange was of him sitting at the bar at The Chameleon (RIP) while he heckled the band across the room. He's funny, but mean. The band tried to yell something back, but the audience was laughing and having a good time. Strange is an intellectual and scruffy beer drinker who will get under your skin. His songs do too. Like his former bands STRAWMAN and SONGS FOR EMMA, MY NAME IS JOE isn't your average three chord punk band. Buzz Lee of SHOTWELL, NASTY CHRISTMAS, TEENAGE SEX and the mysterious JEF provide an excellent rhythmic foundation. The songs are rough and gruff, but they speak the truth and that's what I want to hear. Great album. (CK)
(self-released)

NANDAS – "Exo" EP

NANDAS share a similar rhythmic quality with their contemporaries DAWN OF HUMANS and CRAZY SPIRIT. Lurching pogo drumming, with hardly any use of cymbals, and compelling bass lines drive this dismal racket. The soft vocal style here is the real curveball. It's almost a harsh whisper at times, or at least it sounds that way in the mix, just underneath all the instruments. I applaud unexpected elements like this and think it sounds interesting. Packaged in a nice foldout poster sleeve with nightmarish art. (MA)
(Toxic State)

NEGATIVE STANDARDS – "Fetters" LP

Call me crazy, but truly dark shit like this always makes me crack a smile. Oakland's NEGATIVE STANARDS, deliver us a seriously murky crust platter, served with a heaping side of total collapse, like greeting Armageddon, then just soaking it all in. They've got the bleak atmosphere and heavy-duty rhythm of HIS HERO IS GONE, and their integration of disorienting noise and grim samples give them a DYSTOPIA vibe, as do their general sludgy tendencies. This is some of the best shit coming out of the Bay right now. Get it. (BA)
(Vendetta)

NIGHTCLUB FIRE – "Junkyard Planet" 10"

Hailing from Poland, NIGHTCLUB FIRE performs augmented post-hardcore in an experimental metal style. Imagine a HOT SNAKES project that arose from the '90s European hardcore punk and metal scene. As the LP carries on, the ebb and flow gets smoother and less jaunty. The pace remains basically hard alternative rock, but the twisted undertones, depressing and psychologically warped lyrics, keep it deep and dark and beneath the mainstream. Awesome mid-century UPA studio / Googie-style art, very reminicenst of the HOT SNAKES *Audit in Progress* cover, come to think of it. (JR)
(Antena Krzyku)

NIGHTMEN – "Fifteen Minutes of Pain" CD

Feel good rock'n'roll with a side of power pop, the kind of band that could've supported PIERCED ARROWS if they played Sweden, or been an afternoon act at the Burger Boogaloo. More rockin' than the BOYS' powerpop whirl, but not as rockin' as the DEAD BOYS or the KIDS, though I am sure these guys'n'gals have records by all of the above in their record collections. If you get off on the Bomp! back catalog, dig "woah-oh oh-ohs" and live for Halloween cover band season grab this sucker. They got hooks a plenty and simulate

their favorite records in a way that might set your heart on fire if so inclined. (LG)
(Lovely)

NOLLS – "Strange Attitude" LP

NOLLS feels like two bands mashed into one. On the one hand, these two Finns are space echo obsessed tape punishers and synth pulsers, creating indistinct atmospheres with just the right amount of murk to conjure some vague dread. On the other, they're a sneering two-piece lo-fi garage pop concern. How wonderful it is to get to say that it all works great together. And not just together on the album, but together in the songs! These peppy punk numbers sound great with a little bit of experimental gloom echoing behind them. The only other modern band that I can think of that integrates synth and experimental elements into traditional punk songs this well is Canada's REDD MASS, who sound nothing like NOLLS. NOLLS sound like FOSSIL AEROSOL MINING PROJECT sharing the stage with two depressed kids who listen to a lot of COLA FREAKS and MASSHYSTERI. Look, it's a great record. (LP)
(Lucked Out Tapes)

NURSE – "The Anchor" EP

Absolutely raging Atlanta hardcore featuring bile-soaked vocals and some deeply foreboding guitar leads—augmented but not addled by the occasional chorus effect treatment, maybe similar to their contemporaries in WYMYNS PRYSYN but a lot higher in tempo. If bands like IMPALERS and SLUGGA have kept you cruising on the ever-breaking waves of negativity, catch this one. (EW)
(Scavenger of Death)

THEE OH SEES – "Live in San Francisco" LP

This is the first record with the new lineup, baby, and let me tell you something: about seven years ago I was at a party in the Mission on Halloween. There was this real piece of shit—I'm not kidding, he's still the biggest piece of garbage I've ever met, a real scumbag in the usual ways but a ton of very unusual and vile ones as well—and he was doing his usual drunk asshole shtick and bothering everyone and of course he starts going in on this real sweet guy named Will Ivy who was a bit on the skinny side and much more of a lover as opposed to a fighter, which the antagonist of this story definitely was, and anyways Will was getting bullied like a son of a bitch (not that Will is a son of a bitch, that's just an expression) when out of a shadow came this angel in a rabbit suit (remember it's Halloween) and he had something in his hand and then there was a tremendous *smack* mixed with a horrible *crunch* as what had been a whole, healthy mini-pumpkin smacked right into the piece of shit's nose and breaks it. Blood everywhere. The shit man left, the night was saved. This is the work of Tim Hellman, the man in that rabbit suit, who will forever be my hero and angel even though I was just an innocent bystander and really only witnessed the nose breaking. Anyways this is a double live OH SEES record and Tim now plays guitar for them and they also have two drummers (all excellent players and of course John Dwyer is a very good and very fine singer with a beautiful falsetto). This is a very excellent record. Thank you for allowing me to tell you this. (BB)
(Castle Face)

OLD LINES / WILL POTTER – split EP

Baltimore is burning with an inferno of D-beat rage from OLD LINES. This is a mammoth production of churning blackened filth spewing oblivion and hopeless crust punk dreadfulness. Unpredictable beats upon the brain spelling out atrocities, while a cascading voice recites WILL POTTER's writing through silvery guitars and bass tumbling down amidst audio carnage and poetic verse. Theatrically unique monologues about blank humanity forever drowning in an insufferable existence between ceaselessly intense and unbridled hardcore punk. Haven't heard much like this since BLACK KRONSTADT. Very cool. (JR)
(Life Advice)

1-800-BAND – "High Beams" LP

I guess these guys (and gal) are legit. Produced by Mitch Easter 'n shit. I never thought the kids would be mining the Boss (that's BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, young 'uns), but there's piano and saxamaphone and all the E STREET BAND fixins. I'm sure if you don't grab this you'll be hearing it in regular rotation on "Little Steven's Underground Garage" any day now. Sonically speaking it ain't so far off from ROYAL HEADACHE's adult sister band DICK DIVER, so if you're looking for some grown up muzak to sob over your beer to, this may just be 2016's *Nebraska*. (GB)
(Almost Ready)

ONKIIRTÁS – "Haboru" EP

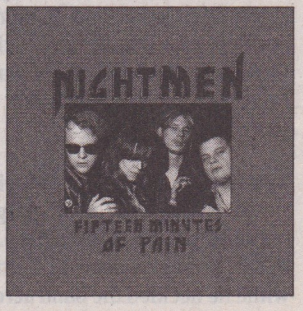
This is a tough one to pigeonhole, off-kilter hardcore with noise rock tendencies all deeply down-tuned and delivered at a lurching pace. There are elements that recall late '90s Relapse Records bands like BURNT BY THE SUN or TODAY IS THE DAY, alongside moments that bring to mind less technical bands from the same era like ENDEAVOR. Hardcore for the adventurous, complimented by an excellent recording job that highlights the drumming and pissed-as-fuck vocals. (AU)
(Permaculture)

THE PHANTOMS – CD

The PHANTOMS have a generic name and the music is somewhat ordinary rock'n'roll, but there is something charming about this CD. The songs have an underdog '80s college rock feel. You get the idea that the PHANTOMS are happier playing for their ten friends and some free beer than for a stadium of screaming fans. That endears them to me. If you are playing music because you simply want to, I'll have a good time listening to you. (CK)
(Rum Bar)

THE PRAGMATICS – "No Rules, Just Fashion" EP

This is fairly straightforward punk from Waltham, Massachusetts. All four songs are about thinking for yourself, and I like that. The



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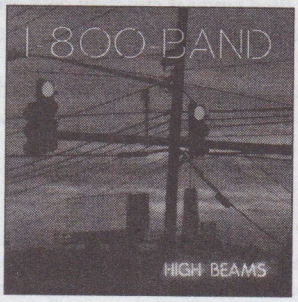
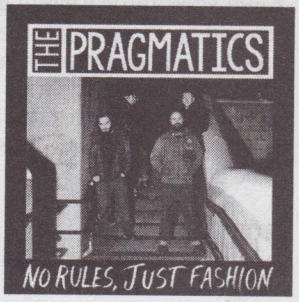




songs have a bit of a street punk vibe but are pretty anti-fashion, anti-drunk punk, anti-mindlessness. One thing that stands out is the vocal enunciation, which isn't something you normally hear in punk aside from bands like DEAD KENNEDYS maybe. I'm really digging the label logo takeoff on Stax Records (though it's self-released, I think they've labeled it Prax Records). There's nothing groundbreaking here but there's also nothing pretentious. I get the feeling that it would be fun to see these guys live. Features members of FRUIT SALAD among others. (JC)
(Prax)

PRIMAL RITE – "Hatred in a Mask of Flowers/Pestilent Clutch"

The former members of SCALPED reconvene with a new singer for this entrant into the sweatpants metal canon. PRIMAL RITE throws a lot of ideas at the wall hoping they'll stick, but "Hatred in a Mask of Flowers" is a mess of disparate riffs, dive bombs, and shouted gang vocals. The flip is better, a convincing facsimile of NYHC in 1991. As of this writing, PRIMAL RITE has already joined the Revelation roster, so they'll find their audience even if they lost me. (SW)
(Warthog Speak)

PRIMETIME – "Going Places" EP

The story I'm told is that the four women in London's PRIMETIME had never played in a band and then produced their first EP, featuring the flawless song "Tied Down." People spend lifetimes playing music and are unable to write a song half as good as that one. So, they set the bar pretty high for themselves, right? On their second record, I don't want to say that they wrote *better* songs, but they're just as good and I think that this record is much better as a whole. "Pervert," like "Tied Down" is a straight-ahead paean to the joys and smells of furtive sexual lust. The lyrics leave nothing to the imagination and it's refreshing. Songs like "Anyway" and "Fallen Out" show how the band has progressed and congealed as a cohesive unit without forsaking any of their raw catchiness. All four songs on here showcase a straightforward, mid-tempo, and instantly classic vibe that is impossible to ignore. I also don't understand how someone can make their vocals sound so blasé, yet full of wonder. What the fuck is up with that? Nothing but slobbering praise here. (GH)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

PROBLEMS – "No Solutions" LP

I had these friends in eighth grade that used to buy grass off some older metalheads (probably in high school if they hadn't already dropped out). You know the type, people that occupy that weird space between *Gummo* and *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*, but with more pimples. I remember seeing one of those fools a couple years later, still dead eyed, emaciated, and with thinner, long blond hair, but sporting a FLAG tee that I assumed had been traded for his older *Vulgar Display of Power* shirt (was a good look homie). I tried to say what up, chat about how *My War* was a sick record but the dude was gone—*wooosh*. I'm pretty sure that dude's doppelganger sings for PROBLEMS. This LP is crazy, not because the music's weird, but because of the attitude. It's raw, simple, and reminds me of early SST, like the STAINS. For Fans of: Sunny D, Carlos Rossi, adopting a middle-aged cat. (MW)
(Lilla Himmel)

RATS REST – "On The Eastside" EP

Another viciously awesome record by one of the best modern Region Rock bands around. It sometimes feels like this band is in the exact melting point between BLACK RAINBOW and HORRIBLE ODDS, but the sound has an unmistakably dark feel to it, as if the band members have listened to nothing but DEAD MOON for the past fifteen years. The songs are super catchy and the hooks are endless, but they are every bit as raw as they are melodic. Catchy as hell and still a downer. I love this band! (FS)
(Peter Out)

RAVI SHAVI – "Independent" LP

Jangly garage pop from this Rhode Island band. There is a big MARK SULTAN influence here. The songs are catchy and upbeat with an old-timey vibe. It's really nice. (CK)
(Almost Ready)

RAZZ – "No Time" EP

At least a couple big hooks here from this power pop quartet, featuring veterans of TALKIES, AIRFIX KITS, ANDY HUMAN, and the PETS. If the phrase "Oakland power pop" doesn't immediately remind you of being burnt out on MATTHEW MELTON projects, you are in for a breezy treat here, a refreshing sherbet in a too-often heavy handed and overly saccharine Cold Stone landscape. "No Time" is the leadoff track and the catchiest thing here, a quality ode to social claustrophobia with shades of early '80s Boston college rock in the intricate guitar leads and tight arrangements, not that it gets as arty as ART YARD or anything. Not all of it lands, though not for lack of competence or effort. "Wish You Well" is a bit clunky and drags on too long, and there is a part towards the end that wouldn't sound out of place in a Chobani commercial. Overall though, this record is beginning to win me over. (EW)
(Warm Wet)

THE RIGHT HERE – "Stick to the Plan" CD

Roots rockin' sounds from Minnesota. Sounds like a room of bearded dudes pounding their chests and spillin' their craft beers on each other or, to put it another way, like DILLINGER FOUR was on Bloodshot Records. Sincere rock music for people that like songs about drinking and lost love. I would rather listen to TEDDY AND THE FRAT GIRLS, but maybe you have a different perspective. (LG)
(Rum Bar)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS – "Massive Fraud/Hate the Police"

This is not my first run-in with RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS and I'm hoping it won't be my last. Side A is straight-up, let's-get-to-it punk'n'roll delivered with intensity and a sense of purpose. I also want to say it's got a hint of both pop and garage. On the B-side, they cover the DICKS' classic number, "Hate the Police". Given that both

bands were Austin bands, I get why they cover it and they do a great job with it. I'm just not sure they really *did* anything with it. In my mind, when you cover a song that classic, it's not enough to just do a good job with it, you need to do something new. Still, the record is definitely worth having and I'm looking forward to getting my own. Neon yellow wax. Nice. (KK)
(End Sounds)

ROTTIES – CD

Punk rock (with emphasis on the rock) from Portland, a ton of tough GIRLSCHOOL style gang vocal choruses and songs about rockin' the fuck out and landlord oppression over fist-pumping music. Sounds like the music from an '80s punksploitation movie, tough and out of control lady punkers raging like maniax with chainsaws through a pit full of decapitated liberty spiked extras. (LG)
(self-released)

ROUGH KIDS – LP

I really liked the first ROUGH KIDS LP and was looking forward to reviewing this one. After listening to this album a few times I'm certain it's a really good record but I can't get away from thinking about how much it sounds like JAY REATARD combined with NEON PISS, which is bittersweet right now. All of those are really high bars, the first ROUGH KIDS LP included. I really like the musicianship here—it's really, really good—and the sense of melody, harmony and hooks, but I can't help but think this falls a little short of their first LP. It's not quite as inspired-sounding and the songwriting seems a little more disjointed. All in all though, this is a great record with obvious influences of the ADVERTS and OBSERVERS. The musicianship really is over the top with acoustic guitar parts, piano, and ripping solos. Favorite tracks are "Life In Danger," which is a nonstop rocker, and "Lights Out," both of which I think may actually be the only two songs sung by one of the dudes. *"Have you talked to strangers? / Is your life in danger now?"* There's a hidden track which plays at 45 rpm despite the rest of the record spinning at 33. (JC)
(Sorry State)

SASS DRAGONS – "True Adventure" LP

I had a terrible fucking week. I lost my dog and I've been looking for him non-stop all over San Francisco for the past five days and haven't been able to really enjoy anything ever since. That is until I put the needle on this record. Thank god (actually no, fuck him, thank *MRR*) for giving me this record to review. This is calculated and catchy-as-fuck pop punk. SASS DRAGONS are known mostly for their drug-fueled, booze-soaked partying. Their third record is a significant departure from their partying days. In the time between their last album and this one, the band members got married and started families. Apparently this album was made after one of the members announced he was moving to New Jersey with his wife and kids. Thinking dad rock? Think again. This is brilliant melodic punk rock which is not too poppy and not too intense—just the right amount of both. This album might have fewer songs about bongs and more songs about being a grown up, but I guess that's just part of life. Side A is upbeat and melodic, reminding me of a poppier version of Recess Records bands like the BANANAS and TOYS THAT KILL mixed with the snootiness of bands like MEAN JEANS. Most of the songs on this side are upbeat and melodic. Side B has songs that are mostly on the slower side. Thank you SASS DRAGONS for this album and for making me feel better! Oh, and I found my dog! (DB)
(Let's Pretend)

SHARK TOYS – "Outsider Sect" LP

SHARK TOYS' prior releases are all solid, but "Outsider Sect" is a direct hit. It's hard not to connect with their hyperactive brand of DIY punk: itchy guitars, buzzing keys and vocals can move from charging to affected without seeming disingenuous at either. The whole brew works. Their MEKONS cover is an impossible choice, but seems like more of an indicator of what they're reaching for with their original tunes. Worth a serious look. (MC)
(Mt.St.Mtn.)

SIEVEHEAD – "Buried Beneath" EP

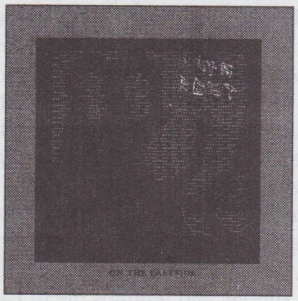
Dark and rhythmically superb punk from Sheffield, fronted by a howling vocalist that brings to mind THEATRE OF HATE, ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN, and DECADENT FEW. Their sound is spacious and has an enchanting effect, while still charging forward at a brisk pace. Both songs on side A are exhilarating and unfaltering. The flip is a hypnotizing electronic dirge, something that could easily bore me to death, but instead totally captivated me (okay, at least for the first two and a half minutes). This one took me a few spins to get in the groove, but what an enjoyable groove it is! A positively stimulating disc. (MA)
(Static Shock)

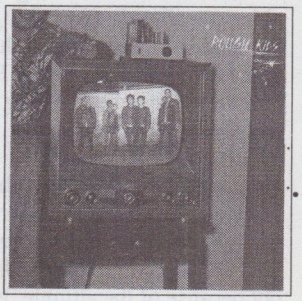
SILENT ERA – "Mini Bosses" EP

These denizens of San Francisco and Oakland deliver four melodic blasts, at least two of which make my skull feel like an echo chamber after I take the record off; I simply can't get them out of my head. An abridged "members of" list boasts NEON PISS, the NEW FLESH, BRILLIANT COLORS, and everyone's favorite Bay Area wedding cover band. They have carved out a sound entirely their own, entangling diverse styles in a way that makes the music sound like it was meant to be that way all along. Elements include the speed and punctuation of hardcore with pop punk infectiousness and a hint of post-punk, especially on the more mid-tempo "Shrinking Lines." The vocals are powerful and dynamic, communicating lyrics about accountability, inequality, and gendered harassment. Pour some SVART FRAMTID, LA FRACTION, and the BRAT in a vat, stir it up and you'll have a formula to cure uninspired ears. I can't recommend this enough. (LT)
(Square One Again)

SISTA BRYTET – "Livet Inglasat" LP

As soon as I read that this band was former members of KNUGEN FALLER, I knew that I was on board. This is the first LP from Umeå, Sweden's SISTA BRYTET and while I had some misgivings, the





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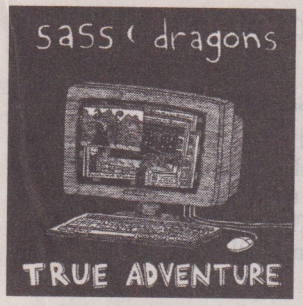

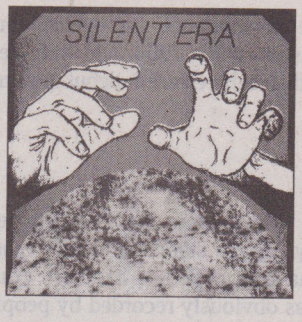

record won me over. They're definitely diving into the pop side of the punk pool, but it's the kind of pop that includes the CLASH, MASSHYSTERI and the members' own pasts. I even want to say that there are traces of SPRINGSTEEN. There's not a weak cut on this entire LP. Every song is dynamic, driving, ultra-catchy and has the kind of attention to detail that I've come to expect from nearly every single punk band I've heard from Umeå in the last fifteen years. There's even a sax on a few songs and I'm still completely on board. This is an excellent LP. (GH)
(Luftslott)

SLEEPTALKER – "Dead Tubes" LP

Floating somewhere between the worlds of post-punk and garage rock is SLEEPTALKER. This is their second LP and my first introduction to them. On songs like "Child Star" and "Anonymous," the band exhibits catchy, upbeat and driving melodies that are definite barnburners. On others, the songs are tight and fun, but the vocal melodies follow the guitar and it feels like lazy songwriting. Maybe it isn't, but that's my take. Lots of songs about women and relationships here. Even though I'm lightly talking trash, the songs are stuck in my head long after I've taken the record off the turntable and that's certainly saying something. (GH)
(ABC Group Documentation / Bakery Outlet)

SLICING GRANDPA – "Grandpas Revenge IV" EP

When something sounds like shit and it's dedicated to Werner Herzog then I'm going to be interested. Three lo-fi disasters collected from older tapes and CD-Rs, of which this band appears to produce a ton of in the way bands do who are more into fucking around on the four-track than playing gigs and trying to "be a band." We get some downer pop, a mid-tempo harsh feedback jam called "Fuck You" (always a good call), and something that sounds like shitty SLINT. It's one of those records that is more about the vibe: It lacks anything I could actually listen to, but I kind of don't mind because I like how weird and damaged it is. If that intrigues you, wonderful, but don't worry if it sounds like it sucks, cause it does. (BW)
(Randstock)

THE SNUBS – LP

It's not often these days that you hear a band so directly influenced by the DEAD KENNEDYS. Fast, poppy rock'n'roll riffs, with jazz interludes, topical sarcastic lyrics, and snotty vocals with a suggestion of that Jello trill. The SNUBS are more direct musically than the DKs, lacking their surf rock guitar stylings, but on the whole it's well done. (AM)
(Moodkiller)

SP CAOS – "Demo 1984" EP

Nada Nada sent us yet another lovingly assembled archival release this month, this one from SP CAOS, a cassette-only noisecore band from São Paulo. (Technically, they put out a 7", but there's only a single copy in existence—the singer of the band took a practice recording to a store that made one-off records for weddings and got a record made with no center hole!) The band formed over a shared love of TERVEET KÄDET, TAMPERE SS, and arcades. From the looks of the insert, SP CAOS almost certainly enjoyed writing their band name on jackets and walls more than they liked to practice, but we're all the more fortunate for it. The singer shouts like a madman, the bassist tentatively plucks away out of time with a deranged drum corps castoff, and the guitarist unleashes a wash of noise. They remind me of ULSTER and KUOLEMA, whose similar sonic assault undoubtedly drew from the same deep well of youthful enthusiasm. Highest possible recommendation. (SW)
(Nada Nada / Spicoli)

STRAIGHT CRIMES – "Windows Have Feelings" 12"

We've got ourselves a plodder of a hardcore punker here. Neg vibes abound in a toxic stew of venomous sludge. Cymbal crashes are your only relief. I swear to god I killed these guys back in 1993, but here we are...a crushingly punk 12" that lacks a standout track to hang your hat on, but that's the common problem with a lot of punkers these days: they refuse to cannibalize three good songs to make one great one. Here is your lazy sonic comparison: early FANG circa 1982. (RW)
(Fine Concepts)

TEMPORAL SLUTS – "Modern Slavery Protocol" CD

Italian punks keep things snotty with a DEAD BOYS sound and a nod to NEW BOMB TURKS and do a hellava job keeping my interest, despite me being quite high on codeine cough syrup (damn these summer colds). Their songs are fast-paced, crisp, and perhaps at times overly enthusiastic. Best song on here is "Black Clouds," which has a STOOGES tinge with a menacing bass that I actually found myself swaying too (too high for a head nod). Not half bad. (CR)
(Area Pirata)

THE TERRORSURFS – "Surf Bomb/Loco Dinosaurio"

Two straight-up reverby surf tunes. They're well-played, fast-paced, and sound authentic. That's really all I want from surf music. Let's hit the beach. (CK)
(Killjoy)

TORPEDOHEAD – "III" CD

Overproduced hard rock from Germany. The music is slick and anthemic. There is so much surface, it's hard to tell if there's any substance. But I'm willing to bet there isn't. The acoustic guitar intro on "Peace Of Mind" doesn't help. Give me something sloppy and trashy any day. (CK)
(Woodhouse)

UNITS – "High Pressure Days" EP

Before I really knew what punk sounded like, this is kinda what I had in mind. Primitive, detached synth punk from late '70s San Francisco. The sparse arrangements, live drums, and raw sound suggest a bedroom TUBEWAY ARMY. The UNITS were artist

types—many of their shows were performance art events—but this is not artsy-fartsy. They existed until 1984 and released several LPs, but it's nice to see this self-released debut getting a reissue. Essential. (AM)
(FDH)

URSUT – "Köp Dig Lycklig" CD

This album is so menacing and epic it blurs the line between metal and D-beat all but completely. By the standards of ten years ago this record would be a must have in anyone's hardcore crust collection—it's devastating! This was obviously recorded by people that know what they want and with the level musicianship required to put together a record this massive sounding. Straight up pummeling drum heaviness like only Sweden can produce completed with multiple screamed vocals, and a raging wall of distortion. In today's atmosphere of sub-genre totality it could unfortunately be written off as played out. The songs here are just so good though. These guys are masters of playing this style and have been in many bands over the years, KONTROVERS being the most similar in sound. I don't want to play the name game too much but if you are a fan of TRAGEDY or fellow Swedish countrymen VICTIMS then this album is definitely required listening. If you listened to that kind of thing ten years ago and look back with remorse now, then you are a poser. Punk is all about diversity, so get with it. (WK)
(Not Enough)

VEHEMENCE / VICIOUS IRENE – split LP

A relentless collection of bangers from Sweden's VICIOUS IRENE. Uncompromising feminist politics and a multi-vocal approach that reminds me of HARUM SCARUM (I'm talking *Mental Health* era, when Erin's vocals were still prominent) do time here with raging Swedish D-beat hardcore / crust. Absolute rippers that make me shake my head at current trendsters' dislike for "crust." Shit kills, y'all. Apocalyptic Euro-crust on the flip from France's VEHEMENCE—a raw and determined hybrid of stadium crust, crushing doom, and white noise blast beats fronted by searing male / female vocals. Looks great inside and out, sounds even better. Killer split. (WN)
(Blackout Brigade / Ruin Nation)

VLMA – "Calypso/Trend Blender"

This came with a cool note to the mag on T-Rex stationary. Each dinosaur had a speech bubble against gender labels, record labels, and all other labels, with a scrawled band formation myth involving death, being cool, NASA, and dead batteries. They play repetitive garage stomp with delicate / aggro mass chanted vocals and a few unfortunate and out of place guitar solo wails. This seems like an outsider take on THEE OH SEES, the moderne garage psyche sound that has taken over the world. I prefer my psyche to resemble the ELECTRONIC HOLE or the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and wish all these revival troupes would go for that rather than Ty or Dwyer. It ends up sounding like '70s macho radio rock rather than psychologically transformative musical reality. This is definitely stranger and goofier than that implies but it's not quite strange or goofy enough for more than one play. (LG)
(self-released)

ZIG-ZAGS – "Running Out Of Red" CD

Thrashy metal harking back to that era when hardcore morphed into metal and made way for hair metal. I remember it well and I am still not a fan. These songs have too many guitar solos backed by driving rhythms and intense vocals. There is a huge METALLICA vibe on this record and I don't like them at all. (CK)
(Castle Face)

V/A – "Neu Ist Zeit: Augsburg 1979-84"

A beautifully packaged compilation of obscure German punk tapes originally released two years ago that'll cost you $40 on Discogs since they only made 200 of them. Comes with a killer contextualizing zine too. Really interesting and cool selection of sounds and representation of a scene that demonstrates how the punk ideal was warped and transmogrified by youth affected by it to achieve many different visions and versions in this era so often described as "post" punk. STALINORGEL reminded me a bit of BÄRCHEN UND DIE MILCHBUBIS, cool stark art punk, both tracks appear to be live, ramshackle punk hits. AMEISENSÄURE play straightforward rudimentary urgent / desperate punk. KALT is wild, dark, stripped-down falling apart doomed sounds, warehouse art student insurrections, but it's strange and otherworldly and not really music. PERVERS released the greatest German punk record of all time, which should have been reissued by now!? These are alternate mixes of two songs from their torpedo bonzer. PERVERS is the sound of teenage girl genius destroying all concepts of music and punk and is easily the coolest thing on here or possibly in the history of music. Best group! DER ZUSTAND employ the tools of space, skronk, and Teutonic intonations to imply a Germanic No Wave reality. Each song has a different feeling and mood and manner, making this a group that needs further investigation on my part. SCHATTEN UNTER EIS play wavering dark wave synth creep, total black turtleneck sneer in a cool/dreamy way. KURZSCHLUSS are a basement goth assembly. The first song on here by the FOG is a cool barely there VELVET UNDERGROUND repetition, like you're watching Brion Gysin dreamachines. Their next is further explorations into the darkwave rudiment. Dreamy doomed stuff! Some of the bands on here had records and official releases, but most didn't, and as punk is so ephemeral—recorded over demo tapes and lost fanzines, etc.—it's cool to have a document of a particular time in space when people made their own culture on their own terms. Worth picking up if you can find it! (LG)
(Randstock)

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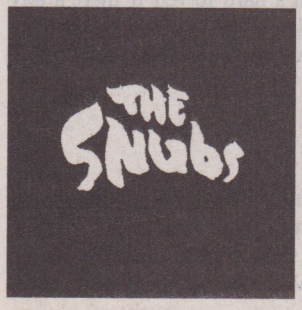

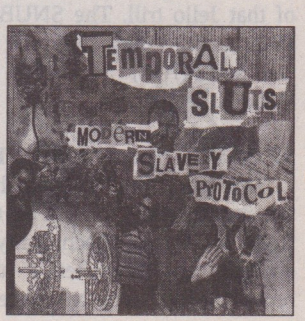

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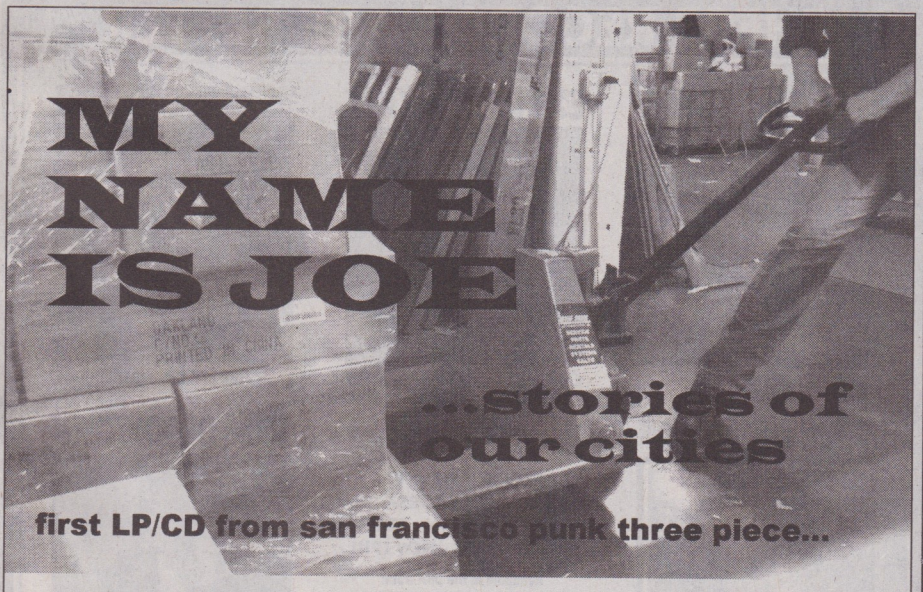

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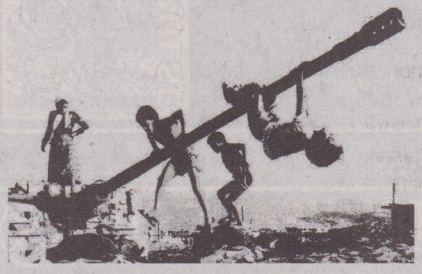

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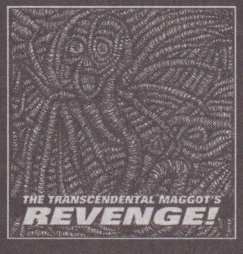

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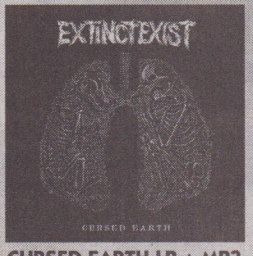

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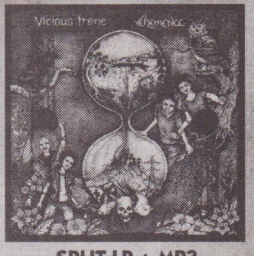

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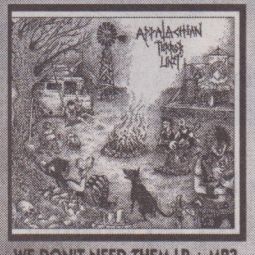

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(SN) Sean Nieves-Quinones
(WN) Robert Collins

BOMBARDEMENT – Holy crap, what have we here? If you're gonna play a style that's been done to death, this is definitely the way to do it! I'm mostly disinterested in listening to new (actual) D-beat bands because there are so many lackluster ones, and because listening to TOTALITÄR, MEANWHILE, or DISCLOSE (or more recently FY FAN or WARCRY) always satisfies me. I'm adding Bordeaux's BOMBARDEMENT to the club. What if the Carolina from RUIDOSA INMUNDICIA fronted WARCRY? It'd be sick right? *This sounds like that.* Proficiently played, tight, intense hardcore. Ultra-referential? Yes. But trust me, there were plenty of moments on here that made me feel like jumping out the fucking window. Only two songs are about war, and at least two others have feminist themes. Jesus fuck, you gotta hear this. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, bombardement.bandcamp.com, nightbrings@yahoo.com,)

CHEW – I dunno why I never think of Chicago as having a sick ass hardcore scene. It's surely my fault for having only ever lived on the coasts, and I surely miss a ton of killer bands like CHEW for it. This is fast and catchy hardcore, like if SAD BOYS didn't just sound like the GRUMPIES but an actual hardcore band that could melt your face off. The intensity and riffs make me think of AREA 51. Eleven minutes and not a wasted second. Hopefully there are tours and an LP in the near future. (AT) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, chewpunx.bandcamp.com, chewpunx@gmail.com, 1920 N Kedzle Avenue #9, Chicago, IL 60647)

CHRON TURBINE – *II* – Bruiser noise punk in the vein of SHELLAC and REPLICATOR, but stripped down to a stoner consistency. Often the guitar is driving one or two chords in a persistent, hypnotic groove that hits heavy with a thick sludge. Featuring members of RYE COALITION, LES SAVY FA, TRANS AM, blah blah blah… That's cool too, but listen to this band now. (MD) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, peterwalkeerecords.bandcamp.com)

COLONIZED – Guitars wet with chorus, all the way from Australia. A sort of melding of CRIMINAL CODE, the ESTRANGED, MANIFESTO JUKEBOX, and RITES OF SPRING. The guitars bring all the hooks and the songs are pretty long, but the writing is cohesive and overall superb. I like that the vocalist uses varied styles, rather that the monotone yell. If you like being washed over by rich-sounding guitar for fifteen minutes (I sure do) you'll certainly enjoy this. (MA) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, colonized.bandcamp.com, colonized.band@gmail.com)

CONCRETE BEEZ – Chattanooga, TN's CONCRETE BEEZ features some punk lifers who have been writing the anthems to my life with bands like ADD/C, HIDDEN SPOTS, SHAFFERS, and JACK PALANCE BAND for the better part of 25 years! As far as comparisons, see above. I think the closest comparison would be HIDDEN SPOTS, but a little older, wiser and jaded, yet positive. Pretty much anything I say that pertains to "gruff, melodic punk" or "region rock" is not going to do this justice. All I can say is that this is perfect and if you have any sort of history with any of their old bands, you will not be disappointed. Get it. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, letspretendrecords.com, P.O. Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402)

COOL JERKS – Honestly, I've listened to this tape three times now and I'm still not sure which words will do it justice. I can say that it sounds familiar and warm with its crunchy, warbly, clean guitar and this fool yelling over it, but there is a touch of magic that sets it apart from the pack. I can't pinpoint that magic, but it's there. They float in the mid-tempo range and sometimes remind me of the SHITTY LIMITS and sometimes they don't. The B-side contains one song that just devolves into a solo, repeating bass riff for six or seven minutes and it's so cool. Get this one. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, cooljerks@hotmail.com)

CROSS STITCH – *Until I Find You* – Steady-like-a-train post-punk from Buffalo. The whole tape comfortably chugs along both sonically and lyrically. In the direction pioneered by bands like KLEENEX / LILIPUT influence, they rank up there with GRASS WIDOW or PANG as a contemporary example of the style. In that same category, on that same level. I really enjoyed this tape and can't wait to hear more. (MD) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, crossstitch.bandcamp.com)

THE CRUNKY KIDS – *Don't Give the Kids Not What They Don't Want* – Ohio dudes playing fast, fun, and goofy hardcore with high-pitched vocals. No real hooks and it just blazes right on by. They throw out two SOCKEYE covers, if that gives you any kind of idea of what we're working with here. (GH) (9-song mini-CD, lyrics not included, 497 Owego Street, Painesville, OH 44077-4122, members.tripod.com/hibachi_records)

CYNOSURE – *Demo* – I blew it and stayed at home to watch the new Pee-wee movie when CYNOSURE was in town a few months ago. My bad, I just can't deal with five band shows. This band is from Olympia, but like fifteen or twenty years ago. Instead of SEX/VID they take their local influences from UNWOUND and the mid '90s. SONIC YOUTH's arty ways can be heard throughout, but it never sounds like SONIC YOUTH. Decidedly not cool in almost every way, the way that you can tell their art is a true reflection of who they are and what they are trying to share with us. Cooler than every hardcore band, hype bullshit, and nerdy KBD song. (AT) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, cynosureolympia.bandcamp.com, 1417 Ethridge Avenue NE, Olympia, WA 98506)

DEVIOUS ONES – Garage punk'n'roll group that comes from chunky riff punk but with the olive branch of power pop. Garage chants, relatable hooks, bouncy vibes—for fans of BAD SPORTS and others with the same fun-time energy. Lyrically they're trying to push a more dangerous aspect. Songs like "Bip (Bust You in the Lip)" are

DEMOS

basically about how they're going to kick your ass. Tough guy garage punk for your nostalgic side. (MD) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, deviousones.bandcamp.com)

DOGS IN THE FIGHT – DOGS IN THE FIGHT are from Idaho and play by-the-books street punk with heavy, dodgy nods to Oi! Gruff guitars and gruffer vocals pound out songs about taking back our country, knowing your rights and being a part of the working class. Got it? Okay. (GH) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, upyoursrecords.com)

FATHER'S DAY – *That's It* – Some 20-something dudes with moustaches from Arizona got together to record really short, basic punk songs with a dude screaming about how he's going through a mid-life crisis, his son is "a gay," and his daughter is a slut. Get it? They're singing from the perspective of an angry dad. No one asked for this. I'm sure the band will think that I don't "get" satire, but this is literal garbage. (GH) (14-song cassette, lyrics included, relatedrecords.com, 2134 E. Earl Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85016)

FULL SUN – *Stick It* – Full disclosure: I love FULL SUN and try to track down everything they put out. They hail from Bloomington, IN and the band usually consists of Jeff Grant writing and recording everything himself (with a little help here and there), but he's joined by a full band on this four-song tape. The results are fuller and more aggressive, building off of Grant's take on indie garage punk and adding some almost-psych elements in the dueling guitar leads (but don't break out your fucking bong, that shit is brief). These songs are perfectly crafted and downright bouncy…like that first cup of coffee hitting you and making you invincible. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, letspretendrecords.com, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402)

GASSED – I could tell by the cover art of a terrified sweaty fat cop with a gun in his face that this band was going to be intense. GASSED is surprisingly brutal powerviolence from Lexington that will rip open a thirty second song and then melt it into a heavy breakdown. They'll run you over like a car, not realizing that you're trapped under the fender, then roar back up to a fleeing-the-scene-of-the-crime speed. Guttural esophagus rupturing grind vocals, a popping machine gun snare that keeps it raw, and relentless crunchy guitar that sounds so distorted that it's going to break. Ten tracks in under ten minutes, and the last one is a three minute noise surge (three times as long as any other track) that dissolves into muck. Goddamn it's heavy. (MD) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, gassed.bandcamp.com)

HINGED – A wall of fuzz with clear vocals. Daniel of ADD/C and Geoff of DEFIANCE OHIO trade off vocal duties with a bleak and humorous look at things, tinged with some hope, delivered cleverly, and backed by pop hooks that will stick with you. Everyone has kind of grown up, but they're still belting them out. My favorite track is "Dr. Evermor," a sci-fi story about being taken from this shit human world. (ML) (7-song cassette, lyrics included 1980recs.com)

HYPERCONDRIAX – *Presents: Welcome to the Golden Age* – This J-card of this cassette is hand-drawn: a cat blowing up something rendered on a junk mail check. I thought this might be the only true physical copy, but it claims you can write an address for more! Sonically, this is hardcore punk, kinda heavy, fast at times, with some wanky guitars. But a few songs in it gets more interesting with some psychedelic practice recordings, and some solid and interesting time changes. The vocals sound de-tuned, or are possibly sung by a video game level-ending boss. (ML) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, 620 Charles Way, Braddock, PA 15104)

LAST WARNING – Short and fast songs with some heavier and dirgier parts. Kind of a slower INFEST, touching on some similar subjects too. There's an awesome taunt of Nazis in the lyric *"you even lost World War Two."* It's sad and scary to think we still have to sing about things like this. (ML) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, bferidehc@gmail.com)

LIVIN THING – *It's A…Livin' Thing* – You can almost hear the froth spewing from his mouth, that's how rabid these vocals are. Shouting about being taught that you're gross and disgusting and feeling like you're worthless, like life is holding your throat and pushing you into the concrete. They're bruiser hardcore, specifically being off-putting to try to start a fight. If you can handle the crushing toxicity then this is the perfect music to bum out to while you're writhing with your internal struggle. Oh, and the cassette's made out of solid gold. Dope. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, ratkingrecords.bandcamp.com)

LUNACY – *Resurgence of Compulsion* – Ethereal coldwave that sounds like a rhythmic rebooting of a truck in your driveway in the dead of winter. The ignition is just not hitting, but rarely do you hear this calm, choking, industrial murmur, correct? So enjoy it, it's not going anywhere. This also sounds like wolves running from a fire, survival panting with crispy effects in the background. Think the OCEAN BLUE vocal pitch trapped deeply in an electro-kraut NEW ORDER TV while crows peck your bloodshot eyes out at 3:00 AM. The glaziest, gaze-iest, ruby red slipknot. Noted that this was recorded in the winter of 2016. Yes, I remember it well, with miserable melancholy. Suitable. Call yourself LUNACY and you get a crazy review. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, duanetimecastle75@gmail.com)

MARY AND THE SMALL OMISSION – *The Effects Are Cumulative* – Bedroom dream pop crafted by Mary Brulatour of Philly's SELF DEFENSE FAMILY. Reminiscent of JULEE CRUISE, MEDICINE and at times BOARDS OF CANADA, Mary and bandmate Steve Price cook up ambient swells and chorus-ed out melodies backed by chilled out MPC beats. For those with sugar hiccups and fans of cherry-colored punk. (SN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, ironpier.bandcamp.com, 564 54th Street, Floor 3, Brooklyn, NY 11220)

MOUTH – Punishing acid punk from NY that'll skip your ears and go right for your ruptured skull. Mechanical wrecking yard drums, sludgy bruiser guitars, devastatingly thunky bass with that David Yow tone and attack, and wrenching vocals that boil into metal shouts of anger. They start minimally with mirror-to-society spoken words before working their way into an epiphany of metalcore chorus. Their skramz songwriting backgrounds really create an atmosphere and take the songs in a direction that I wasn't expecting. Heavy, all-encompassing bass chords backdrop atmospheric guitar solos. Whoa. (MD) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, mouthmusicli.bandcamp.com)

PINES – This Olympia trio plays dark, melancholic songs full of moodiness and melody. Truly the sounds of being lost in the woods in the Pacific Northwest in the middle of the night, with nothing but a fingernail of a moon shining overhead. The wet air soaks your lungs. You're not sure if the rest of the world will still be there by the time you get back. Pines boasts two members of MARGY PEPPER and one of DYKE DRAMA, and this release lives up to that pedigree. The arpeggiated guitar weaves in and out of the fabric created by the rhythmic bass and churning and weighty drums. This band is not to be missed. Catch them on an east coast tour with DYKE DRAMA this fall! (SN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, allthepines.bandcamp.com, 1318 SE 7th Avenue, Olympia, WA 98501)

P.M.S. – Hardcore punk from Paris with banging three-chord guitars, ride-heavy drums, and energetic catchy chants that are easy to get behind. My favorite line is *"you got that PMA, we got that P.M.S."* Gotta love that good-time-fuck-you punk attitude with that traditional hardcore attack. They

also have some heavy downer breakdowns towards the end of the tape, so the cassette is, well, emotional, with its ups and downs. The cover is an image of a woman with her arms powerfully raised in the air, so she's a long thin red shape, and a tampon string coming out the bottom, physically glued to the tape. This cassette is worth it almost purely for the creative artwork! (MD) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, pmsxmusic.bandcamp.com)

QUOD MASSACRE – *Fait Accomply '83-86* – Doomtown Records (Croatia) has done a new run of this monumental 1986 tape produced in former Yugoslavia (present day Slovenia). Luckily, through a trade with the guy who runs said label, I scored the Ne! Records release a few years back, introducing me to QUOD MASSACRE for the first time. This band played a really interesting melody infused hardcore that I can describe as something like ASTA KASK meets MOB 47 on one hand, and DISCHARGE with traces of MOTÖRHEAD on the other. The tape comes with an impressive zine containing live photos, drawings, and the lyrics with English translations. It's good to finally have access to the lyrics, which (surprise!) are totally haunting. This is good music and an important artifact of world punk history. (LT) (19-song cassette, lyrics included, aftermathtapes1.bandcamp.com)

RAVAGED – This is a little outside my radar, more on the metal side of hardcore. The lyrics are mostly in German, but some English and with titles like "Civilization," "Freedom," and "Deutschland," I can imagine that we are both screaming about the same things between those blastbeats. (AT) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, ravagedpunx.bandcamp.com, ravaged@gmx.de, Schleiermacherstr #4, 57003 Koln, GERMANY)

RHIZOME – This is exactly what I'm looking for in hardcore: heavy riffs that blast through and drums that are absolutely relentless, producing a pulsing barrage of machine gun impacts that keep the hardcore heartbeat racing. The crux of the music is the stabbing staccato vocalists, resisting an aggressively masculine macho culture, while dealing with self-inflicted personal negativity, struggling under the weight of the crippling cis male aggression as well as the weight of personal depression and negative self-image. It's a travesty that this band broke up a few weeks ago. Definitely look out for future projects from these members. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, transylvaniantapes.bandcamp.com)

RIMJOB – All fag hardcore band from New Orleans, with members of PATSY, the CHAIN, DICK BINGE, and CHIN UP MERIWETHER! I think that should be enough for you to give it a listen. Blastbeats, unrelenting humidity, and the utter rage of being queer in the south make this the best tape I've gotten in months. Recommended! (AT) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, rimjobnola.bandcamp.com, rimjobnola@gmail.com,1300 Marigny Street, New Orleans, LA 70117)

ROOM 101 – *The Endless Drip* – The cover made me think that this would be some leftovers from the failed peace punk revival of a few years ago. It's not. This is some pissed and raging D-beat hardcore that seems to take a few notes from the early '00s Tennessee sound. DIS***** bands galore can also be heard. The vocals are a little louder than most of those references and it's a good move. Sometimes tapes like this fall flat after the second song and leave you wishing it was maybe just a 7", but this is a solid full-length well worth all thirty minutes. (AT) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, eric.sunderman@gmail.com, room101cincinnati.bandcamp.com, , 1639 Glen Parker Avenue #3, Cincinnati, OH 45223)

SBDC – *Future Ex-Wives* – I'm not sure how this Vancouver band made their tape sound like it got transported through a time warp from a 1998 Canadian DIY pop punk scene, but they did. My friend Barker might ask "How dey do dat?" SBDC do that cool trick where they borrow liberally from already popular songs to lend familiarity to their repertoire (like well-worn '50s-style crooners and repurposing a SPRINGSTEEN lyric). But, just so we're clear here, *this fucking rules*. It's smart, brash, catchy and fun. I can't ask for anything more. (GH) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, sbdc.bandcamp.com)

SKYMARS – Are you into AGE or *Digital Evil*-era S.D.S.? Cool, you should get this. SKYMARS are from Niigata, Japan. They rock, and sound like said examples with even more epic metal. They're heavier, crustier, flashier, and slower. Like AXEWIELD with PAINTBOX vocals. Appreciate and support this without regret. (JR) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, Black Seed Records, PO Box 28, 27600 Raub, Pahang, MALAYSIA)

SPENCERMOODY&THEANZALONES – *An Old Man Called Me Bud Cort* – Is this punk? Is Spencer Moody (formerly of the MURDER CITY DEVILS) a punk? I kinda think the answer to both is no, but I like this. It you left the MURDER CITY DEVILS like ten years ago and spent all your time in a dark smoky bar alone reading books and writing sad blues rock songs this is what you'd have. (AT) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, letspretendrecords.com, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402)

STAGNATION 73 – *Vancouver* – The riffage of DOOM with the attitude of POISON IDEA. What a wild and successful combination. This is hardcore for the old-core with venomous vocals, and the adrenaline of American thrashcore. But STAGNATION 73 are from Canada, so see CAPITALIST ALIENATION. Blistering speed with NYHC bitterness and CRUCIFIX's production. I'm just as confused, yet right there with every note and sincere intention. Take that for what its worth. (JR) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, stagnation73@gmail.com)

TOWANDA – *Plaything* – A fuzzy trudge through the sludge. Repetitive instrumentation with powerful female voices that snake and sway through the swamp. It's somewhat of an ogre battle in there at times! The fuzz acts like a blanket and the vocals are a lullaby that really put me in a pleasant trance. (ML) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, towanda.bandcamp.com)

TYPEWRITER – Completely inscrutable. Sometimes, this is on the edge of angular art punk and smooth at the same time. The second song is just a lifted riff from BLUE ÖYSTER CULT's "Burnin' for You" with a dude mumbling over it. Later on, it gets mathy and melodic with driving drums. It's hard to pin down, but the whole tape is really catchy and memorable, which is more than I can say for half of the stuff I've heard this month. (GH) (4-song cassette, no lyric sheet included, facebook.com/skullreefer3000, P.O. Box 300, Blue River, OR 97413)

UNITED VOID – This is hardcore punk, fast at times, with slow tom work on the drums, as well as standard breakdowns. Pretty regular composition-wise. Vocals are pretty clear. Overall it is competent and fun but not anything new or groundbreaking. (ML) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, unitedvoid.bandcamp.com)

U.S. NERO – The letter accompanying this asked for one of our "notoriously snarky, dismissive reviews," so here ya go. New Orleans' U.S. NERO fall more into the experimental indie-rock spectrum than punk. They play fairly straightforward (and good!) alternative rock, but run it through a mountain of digital effects, vocal layers and samples that distorts everything to a near-breaking point. It gives the whole affair a woozy, half-drunk, funhouse mirror-style effect. It sounds like drugs…any of them…all of them. Do you like drugs? (GH) (14-song CD-R, lyrics not included, usnero.bandcamp.com)

WAD – WAD is a newer NYC band with

a vocalist who sounds like later period GG through reverb. The guitar sounds like it was run though a reverb / phaser pedal. They play fast, ugly punk in the vein of the current crop of the wild deadbeat slimeballs in New York and the mutant Midwestern sounds. There are only three songs, but the third song is longer than the first two combined. I thought the last song would be some sort of five minute, epic slime punk opus, but it just sounds like 5 hardcore songs smooshed together. It's a good start. (GH) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, wadnyc.bandcamp.com)

WHITE GIRL WASTED – *I Fell Asleep Like This* – Cyber punk digitally summoned from busted synths and computers, sung by New Orleans diva Local Honey. Think DIAMANDA GALAS getting drunk on too much champagne, reading Donna Harraway, then playing Shadowrun. Surprise guest vocals from, amongst others, Alli Logout of the ATOMIC TANLINES and SPECIAL INTEREST. Elven decker music about death and survival; not easily digestible, but those experiences often aren't. (SN) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, ifellasleeplikethis.bandcamp.com, 316 S Salcedo Street, New Orleans, LA 70119)

WHOOPI STICKS – From Lowell, MA, WHOOPI STICKS brings us their first three-song demo. They play basic, bouncy punk in the style of BIKINI KILL (first demos) and some traces of X RAY SPEX. (I'm not just saying that because the singer is female. I mean it.) Some of the transitions from mid-tempo to fast sound unnatural and awkward, but I'm sure that will smooth over with time. When the band is playing mid-tempo and melodic, it sounds so good…like it's what they were meant to do, but the fast, more hardcore parts sound forced and clunky… which I said, might smooth over. Overall, a good demo. (GH) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, whoopisticks@gmail.com, 1 Butman Place, Lowell, MA 01851)

XM2 – An absolutely scorching effort from this Barcelona outfit featuring and recorded by the guitarist from ABSURDO. A basic hardcore backbone sprouts countless guitar treats and oddities, accompanied by ferocious vocals. An innovative Spanish hardcore punk nightmare! This is the U.S. pressing. Do not miss! (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, commoditytapes@gmail.com)

V/A – *Fuck the Legion, Fuck the Lyrics, Fuck the Lot of View Vol. II* – A lovely DIY tape compilation by a Greek label, featuring three Greek bands and one from Turkey, all previously unknown to me. The tape opens with KOPROSKILA's 2010 demo of stampeding street punk / hardcore hybrid. Istanbul's UGLY SHADOWS represents the deathrock end of '80s UK anarcho punk. KAVALA SS lays out four competent covers (BASTARDS, RUDIMENTARY PENI, the EXECUTE, and TAMPERE SS) and two originals, which sound more in the vein of the EXECUTE. Last up is TOXIC MINDS whose burly D-beat hardcore sound is made up of equal parts '90s Greek crust and RIPCORD. I was already charmed by this sparkly blue paper, but the music on here is pleasingly varied and strong. Great comp, as evidenced by my "pulsating innards." (MA) (26-song cassette, lyrics not included, Stand Against Vivisection, PO Box 1456, 65110 Kavala, GREECE)

V/A – *World of Birds Records: Affordable Luxury* – This Cleveland record label offers up more of a five-way split cassette comp! FIZZ plays psych-y, almost country tinged '60s rock with delayed out vocals and one thudding drum. The URBAN COWBOYS churn out melancholy synth-pop that reminds me of DIRTY BEACHES. The bands featured all share a penchant for melodic, reverbed-out vocals, strong barre chords, and simple drums. If you like that neo-psych garage feel-good style, you already know this is for you. (SN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, worldofbirdsrecords.com)

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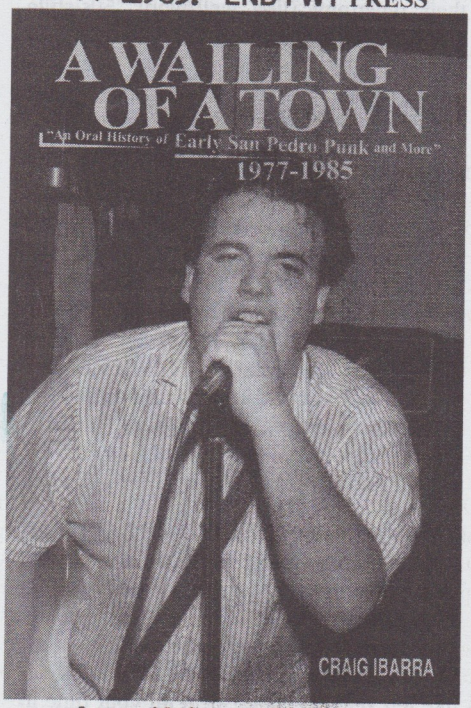

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700 PIE MAN
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These comix are on the zine-y side: It's like a sketchbook of doodles with some collage. That is to say, there isn't any plot or cohesive storyline, or dialogue or jokes really. The art itself is pretty simplistic and scribbly. All that being said, I know a few people from Athens, GA and it's something of a cultural wasteland out there, and pretty hard to get any art thing going at all. No one I've meet from there really has that much good to say about it, so it's hard to want to discourage somebody from making art out there. Consider trading with this person just cuz they're living in Athens. (MX)
triplebummer.com

AS YOU WERE: A PUNK COMIX ANTHOLOGY #4
$10 / 120 pgs
Silver Sprocket has put out another good punk comics anthology. The price is totally fair for what you get. The print job is good, with minimal pixelization, good grayscaling, and the margins line up. They've done a good job assembling the work of different punk cartoonists from across the US and at least three from the UK. The theme of the book is "living situations" which is basically about punk houses. One of the things I like about this anthology is that there's a lot of variety in the cartoonists' styles. Maybe you won't like every comic in it, but you can pick out the artists you like, and check out their bios and contact info in the back, and find out more about their work. My two favorite comics are the one about the kitchen sponges by Shannon Knox, and the one about the crappy roommate by Nomi Kane. The sponge comic explains the universal system on how you cut the corner off a counter sponge to signify that's what it is, so dishes aren't washed with a nasty counter sponge. It's hella simple, but a lot of people don't get the system, if they even bother doing dishes at all. I liked the humor. Nomi Kane's is about a crappy roommate who trips off her keeping tampons in the bathroom because he thinks it's trashy or whatever. The dialogue is well written—the way she verbally boxes him in during the argument. It's a good portrayal of a crappy roommate, but I also like her style visually, because it reminds me of Phoebe Gloeckner, one of my favorite cartoonists. Another comic that stood out was Brad Dwyer's. Aesthetically I like the cartooning style—it's clear that he's a super good drawer and put in a lot of work. However the content—in which him and his wife compare living with punks to living with their two children—was kinda whatever to me. I know it can be weird to hate on people for being breeders, but it's more like it's frustrating when people *only* see the entire world through their kids. The last sentence in the comic really rubbed me the wrong way: "I think bad decisions and misplaced aggression are probably the strongest common threads between punks and kids!" Really? I think there are as many different kinds of punks as there are firemen, teachers, doctors, homeless people, etc. We're not all childish idiots who don't know what time it is and act up for no reason, but they're entitled to their own opinion. Anyhow, what's tight about an anthology is hopefully there's something in there for everyone. I think about thirty-five different people have work represented here. Gotta respect the level of organizing it takes to put a thing like this together. (MX)
1057 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110 / silversprocket.net

AGITATED ANIMALS
16 pgs
A fledgling cartoonist's attempt. It's about a bunch of cute animals who have a punk band together, but unfortunately one of them has a crack problem. The art is pretty basic, but clearly there's room to grow. I met the artist once, and she was still pretty young. She did say that *Happy Bunny* was one of her inspirations for this comic, and there are a few notable similarities. Audrey, who originally came up with that comic, is into this whole style of comix she calls "adorable things doing horrible things." Or, as it is called in manga: *abunakawaii*. That is to say, there are enough of these comics to have a genre. While the art has a ways to develop, the characters are at least consistent and you can tell what's going on. The dialogue reads alright, and the story is kinda funny. I'm inclined to cut this cartoonist some slack, since I know they started out drawing comics somewhat recently. Their online work looks a little more together, like maybe they made this comic quickly. I just wonder if it's right to encourage someone down this accursed path. One time when he was a kid, my friend Rio's mom asked Art Spiegelman if he had any advice on how to encourage her son as a young cartoonist: "Break his fingers" he replied. (MX)
facebook.com/theartisticpunkillustration

DEEP FRIED ZINE MPLS #9
$1 / 24 pgs
Garbage food zine for garbage guys. *Deep Fried* #9 includes some food and beverage reviews (Faygo 60/40 doesn't live up to the hype, the Burger King "Angriest Whopper" will give you the runs—no shit), a few columns, a handful of interviews with bands with names like Love Cop and Mean Jeans about their eating habits on the road, some retrospectives on bygone fast food promos, a handful of goofy illustrations and some terrible Photoshop hack jobs. It is pretty rough. *Deep Fried* commits one of the worst crimes committable by a zinester in 2016—trying to force a meme into print. It doesn't even make eating seem fun or appealing. After getting halfway through this one I felt like going on a raw diet. Also, there is a straight-up racist comic in here ("Sheeeit, dat Sh'quanda? Big Mac

ZINES

patty lookin' ass") so fuck this zine, fuck "Fast Food Rood Dood," and fuck all of its contributors. Catch me at the farmer's market from here on out. (EW)
2901 Yosemite Avenue South, St. Louis Park, MN 55416 / videophobia222@hotmail.com / deepfriedzinempls.com

FEELINGS
$3 / 20 pgs
Tear or raindrops filled in with chalk drawings/collages of things like human shapes and eyes and pants with no body in them, a poor man's Daffy Duck, or candles, or scribbles. I enjoy looking at this. There are no words to beef it up, so maybe I'd only buy it in some sort of package deal with the other cool things this person makes. (JB)
755 E. 10th Street, Oakland, CA 94606 / smartbrainsrecords.blogspot.com

FEELINGS #2
24 pgs
Erin Allen has been my acquaintance for years here in the Bay. I might have played a show or two with him, I'm not sure. I know I've sat next to him at shows and we've talked a couple of times. Once we danced together in the kitchen of the Church and he was wearing a hoodie and I cinched it up really tight till it was a little o shape around his nose. He might have done the same to me, I don't remember. I have a poster he made on my wall that has Andy Capp skipping under text that says "Going to Cam Huong." For those of you who aren't familiar Cam Houng is a Vietnamese cafe specializing in cheap noodles, banh mi, and my favorite, the avocado milkshake with boba. Someone was in my room the other day and they quipped that it was the kind of object that would be more interesting in New York than in my lowly Oakland bedroom. But Erin's work is Oakland fan art and it belongs here. Erin's radical localism isn't as obviously reflective here visually but perhaps we are meant to absorb it emotionally. Big ass pages full of xeroxed pencil and weird collage. Mostly abstract forms floating save for a few humorous jabs like the crescent moon throwing up the peace sign or the giant cartoon eye. These clearer pictures against the grainier pastoral forms they hover around do bring to mind the experience of walking around Oakland. The time you saw a group of people fighting around a pickup truck that was full of goats on your bike ride home around 2:00 AM. Or the time that guy across the platform started trying to harass you by saying he wanted to let you know he has his own apartment and it has a shower and a toilet and he wants to wash your panties there. We are environmentally razzed. (EC)
755 E. 10th Street, Oakland, CA 94606 / smartbrainsrecords.blogspot.com

FLAUSTIN PARADISE #1
$5 / 24 pgs
This is a photo zine shot at This is Austin, Not That Great. It's got shots of CCTV, Lumpy and the Dumpers, Glue, La Misma and others. It would've been cool to see some pictures of the other bands that played the fest—I'm bummed that there aren't any of Patsy or Urochromes. It got me thinking that I saw a lot of photos of bands who get photographed a lot and not a ton of photos of bands that don't. The photos that are in there are engaging though. It's worth a look if you missed out on this fest and you want to relive some of the action, but don't expect to see a shot of every band. (CD)
10000 Dorset Drive, Austin, TX 78753 / mikereauwave@gmail.com

HUMAN PROBLEM: A COLLECTION OF DAILY GIL
$3 / 32 pgs
I wouldn't call this LOL territory but definitely smirk zone-y. Each page is a single panel water brush comic that probably has a snowman, swirly eyeballs, Death, a sperm, or the whirly part of a yin yang symbol with a face on it, a dinosaur, Gumby, or something else clever and some retorts or speech bubbles making it cheeky or brilliant or something like that. A fine addition to your shitting regimen. (JB)
755 E. 10th Street, Oakland, CA 94606 / smartbrainsrecords.blogspot.com

JUST FILE UNDER PUNK #2
free / 11 pgs
Cool Australian zine that was just printed from a computer, so expect a large full-page format that seems to be just generated from a word processing program and some cut and paste. This person was around in the UK for the early anarcho-punk scene, so they have a unique perspective on a lot of the newer stuff covered in this zine. It's a mix of new and old really: record reviews of La Misma, Masses, and Moth releases alongside a review of a Conflict show from 1981. Also included are pictures from another Conflict gig and a mini retrospective of Crisis and Black Flag. Interesting zine, if only they left us their contact! (AP)
no info

LIVING IN THE CITY #5
20 DKR / 40 pgs
Living in the City is dedicated to the Copenhagen punk and hardcore scene and is so well put together that it feels more like a true magazine than your average DIY zine (but still punk enough to not have ads and to put all issues of this online as free PDFs). The look is snappy and mod like *Trust* and there's plenty inside: table of contents, editorial, record reviews, news, interviews, photos, and a lot more. Big Mess, Bliss, Dark Matter, and Gorilla Angreb are all featured in short but concise and thoughtful interviews. I've never been about Danish punk but this zine makes me want to change that. This one is particularly well done. (BW)
livinginthecityzine@gmail.com / livinginthecityzine.wordpress.com

KEYBOARD WARRIOR #2
$6 / 48 pgs
Pretty tight little Swedish zine, which pleasantly rambles all over the place. It's slightly slick, but still super punk. Record reviews, interviews with Finnish thrash dudes Foreseen, Swedish maniacs Axe Rash, Madrid punks Tensión, and a cute little mini book report on the classic graphic novel *Skin* (which I've been dying to get my hands on for ages). This wasn't mind blowing or anything, but it was pretty cool, and I totally dug the bands he wanted me to dig... so I guess his little plan worked. The author has been threatening to quit writing the zine since the moment he started the first issue. I think that's a bad idea. (DZ)
brainabuse.com

MARIQUITA #2
$18 / 50 pgs
I always ruminate on visibility as a liberatory concept. It's a double-edged sword really, depending on who is positioned as the gaze and the nature of the exchange. Our yearning to be seen is quite natural really, but this world usually doesn't know how to handle those whose visibility isn't desired and when a push for visibility comes, it is the conquerors who are calling the shots and telling our stories for us; you see it in zines, galleries and ads. When you are suddenly the new cool thing but still living off of

side hustles. Genesis captures those who are not always seen, or seen in a disjointed gaze. Queer, trans, and people of color are shot here, in the intimate and public. Showcasing people in a natural context, candidly and free along with their surroundings. This is real and raw / brown4brown / a cool way of subverting the dominant gaze. Interspersed between the photos is text reminding us about struggles, positive affirmations, and realities surrounding queerness. The zine is full color and shot on a disposable camera so expect a lot of warmth and slight graininess of rather bold subjects. Please don't be discouraged by the price, it's totally worth it. (AP)
genesismartinezcrespo.bigcartel.com

THE MATCH! #115
free / 72 pgs
Do you want to know what's better than reading hours and hours worth of a cranky old man complaining about shit? When that cranky old man is an anarchist who has been fired up and complaining about shit in his zine since 1969! For those who don't know, a lot of love and hard work go into each issue of this zine, printed and typeset by the cranky ass author, without the use of any computers. I don't know if it's the irregularity of when I get to read these combined with my shitty memory, or if Fred is getting incredibly even grumpier with age. I feel like you could open this up to practically any page, start reading any of the cop hating, computer kicking, cantankerous paragraphs in any order, and be just as bewildered if you read the whole thing front to back. A seriously impressive zine and book review section, rants on facial recognition software, police insanity / brutality, and so much more. It's free, but thick as fuck, so throw a couple bucks in, you cheap ass. Do *not* send a check! (DZ)
PO Box 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702

THE OREGON PRISONER FORUM # 1
12 pgs
A zine that is entirely prisoner edited and contributed is a rare thing. Rarer still is this sort of thing existing in such a localized capacity. *The Oregon Prisoner Forum* seeks to provide a "forum for prisoners to express ourselves and communicate" as well as "identify and define our adversaries so that we can explore means of overcoming them." The content has some solid back and forth critique about the foundational fuckedness of prison as well as a short poem about cops and a really cool look at alternatives to AA. They are also actively seeking submissions so if you have anything relevant to contribute please submit to the address below. (EC)
Portland ABC, 109 SE Alder Street, Unit #0717, Portland OR 97214

PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN TEENAGER
$3 / 12 pgs
Like a blank screen upon which one can project their own conclusions, ideals, convictions, and biases, this zine contains only evidence submitted to the FBI that the KINGSMEN song "Louie Louie" is obscene. There is no editorializing, though there is no need when one can surmise plenty from the following: the lyrics, internal files registering a complaint from a blacked out source, laboratory notes explaining the submission of evidence, photocopies of the vinyl including both sides, state department reports dated 1964, a letter explaining that a concerned citizen submitted it because it was very popular with high school students in the area. It gives me pause to have come of age in the 2 Live Crew era of "obscenity" and think that a song that merely talks about leaving a ship to see a girl would cause this kind of stir. It's a carefully produced kind of art that serves to turn the mirror to the viewer and turn up the magnification. Which topic ignites the most? The fuckedness of the FBI? The narc that is spying on the teens? The beginning of the end for the era of tightly controlled sexuality? Rock'n'roll…itself? (JB)
755 E. 10th Street, Oakland, CA 94606 / smartbrainsrecords.blogspot.com

PUNK IN MY SOUP #2
$5.50, £2.5 / 40pgs
Punks In My Soup (*PIMS*) number two starts off with a slow roll: there's a pretty whatever intro (though it uses the delicious phrase "dodge pot battle mosh" regarding a situation you, dear punk reader, can likely infer) and an interview with No Form that is pretty blasé. Fortunately, from there it picks up. The album/demo reviews are in-depth and full of the kind of band research and references that show the author really gosh darn cares about music and—by golly!—can write about it with grace and honesty. I also really appreciated how the album reviews were broken up by a tour diary with Diswolf and then flowed into a compelling interview with Aurochs—where in they talked about booking shows, what DIY community means, and food (with explosions in the background to boot). All that content is capped by a piece about a weekend attending a series of shows in London that was interspersed with commentary about punk, the bands, and transporting yourself around a big city you don't live in (and can get very lost in when you are drunk). Combined with 3D printed text on the cover, good photo reproduction throughout, and the red splatter paint effect on the pages of text (love that splatter paint!) and you have a great zine. *PIMS* #2 made me laugh and made me think, but mostly it made me want to go to a show, listen to some bands, crack a can, and write about it all. (KS)
michahjensen@yahoo.com

SCUMBURBIA #0
$6 / 20 pgs
This comic is about two seventh-grade punks trying to get to a show. The art is simple and cartoony with strong black and white and heavy lines. Even though it's simple, each background is drawn in solidly, and there are panels from many different perspectives—it's not just talking heads. The pacing is good, and there are lots of jokes, and dialogue that does a good job of telling a funny, cohesive story. It's situational humor, not offensive for the sake of being offensive, or overly mean-spirited. I do wonder why he chose to write a story with little kids as the main characters—who did he envision reading this? I suppose it could have a pretty wide target audience and most parents would be OK with their kids reading it (I think). It says in his bio that he works for the *Simpsons*, so maybe it just seemed natural to have the main characters be little kids. Some of the characters have Simpson-esque hair, but his style is mostly different than Groening's. I do think if he's got connections like that, me writing a review of his comic seems a little unnecessary. Like, what's my nod of approval worth compared to TV people working on a show of that magnitude? Hopefully he's down for the comics and not just using them as a stepping-stone to pitch his own animated show I guess it's one thing to be part of an engine that big as a day job, but it's not the same level of fulfilling as working on your own comix, and pursuing your own art dreams at night… (MX)
samgrinberg.com

SEAMS & STORY II: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN LUNGS
Narrative poems take a lot of skill. Wren Awry as put together a string of seven poems. They literally begin at birth and remark: "The baby breaks its own shit... *Stupid baby*." Breath and life are certainly themes curling through adolescence through loss of innocence through family through the dryness of the desert. It's a small and sweet chapbook that doesn't skimp on the cuss words (which are my favorite parts). (EC)
seamsandstory.noblogs.org

SPALENA RAMENA #4
$6 / 44 pgs
A piece that criticizes big technology and many modern punks unchecked support of it starts off this zine out of Brno in the Czech Republic is setting the tone for the well done shotgun cut-and-paste layout. The pride for Brno from both the author and subjects shows in the various interviews—both "Brno Fresh Blood" and those with bands elsewhere in Europe that played Brno—along with even the record and show reviews. The writing has focus and determination, and Erik is one of my favorite kind of interviewers, where he wants to really find out what makes the bands tick, and asks questions that gets them talking. Although maybe not useful in all other places, the guide to squatting in specifically Amsterdam was quite interesting. (DG)
Botanická 34, 602 00 Brno, CZECH REPUBLIC / shrunky@freemail.hu

SPIDDER #18
$2 / 24 pgs
You know some evenings you come home after a long stretch of work and you just plunk down on the front stoop and crack open a nice, refreshing zine and say "Ah, how relaxing." You want something not too high gloss—just black and white—that's got cute comic strips featuring adorable anthropomorphized animals (like those of Scaredy Cat getting their fortune read or drinking too much coffee), a short story with nice prosaic writing about traveling through the south, and a simple but interesting interview with a good band from Japan (Your Pest Band). All that interspersed with well-reproduced photos and some one-page drawings, and that's a good zine to call it a day with. You walk away feeling like the world's a little lighter, and that there's more out there than the things you see day to day. (KS)
1925 Highway 69 South, Savannah, TN 38372 / arkamrecords.net

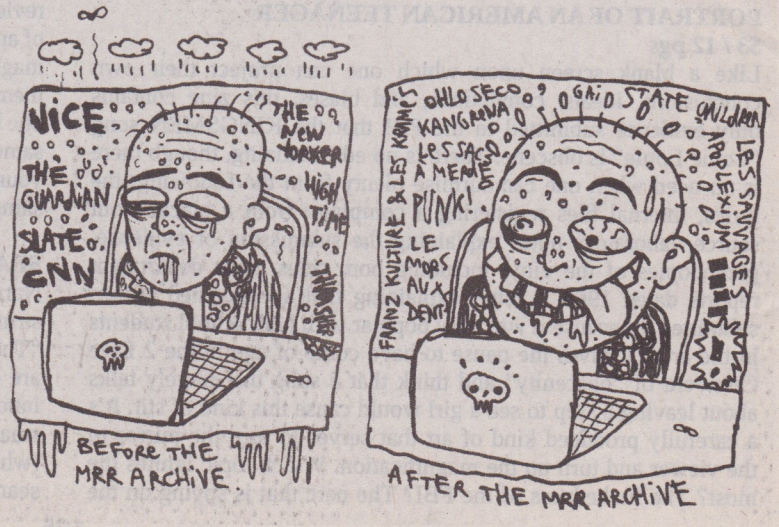
TLAL X
$4 / 63 pgs
Will Butler of To Live A Lie Records commemorates and looks back on the ten years he's spent running the label. He talks about the first couple of years, doing split releases with other labels (the *Skate Attack* tape he did with Give Praise records is particularly worth your time), and offers up reprinted interviews of various TLAL bands, along with a few members of bands sharing stories related to their TLAL releases. The in-depth, passionate writing is rounded out by various pictures of TLAL vinyl, merch, photos of Will and friends, and even label-inspired tattoos. I've complained about the photo reproduction in issues of Will's other zines that I've gotten for review, but the quality is notably better here, and the layout is stark but neat. The 106 record discography is impressive, though the association with ACxDC leaves a sour taste in my mouth (I suppose I'd need "facts and evidence" of said sour taste for Sergio to believe me). (DG)
2825 Van Dyke Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27607 / tolivealie.com

TOLEDÖ PONKERÖS #1
$1 / 23 pgs
Three short interviews make up this zine for the Toledo, OH scene, a town overshadowed by nearby Detroit and Cleveland that wants to show what goes on in their slice of the punk world. There's an interview with teen punks Don't Get Bored and some constructive shit talking and musing on Toldeo from local metalhead Ben Starrett and Cleveland's Richard Rodriguez of Saucepan Records. The latter two interviews have a few thoughtful quips but there's not much to dive into. Here's hoping for more installments because I see this best read when there are enough issues out that you can breeze through a few in one sitting. (BW)
2538 Beaufort Avenue, Toledo OH 43613 / lcodrnr@hotmail.com

TRANSLINGUISTIC VOLUME #3
40 pgs
I wasn't sure what to make of this zine at first, but after two long months of deep thought...I like it. It's a 40-page graffiti zine with a lot of duplicate pages, but some of the duplicates are printed on different paper, and it's got Halloween stickers on some of the pages. A great wealth of content makes up for the severe lack of staples. How does one go about getting this? Internet research and a seemingly defunct Twitter account point to a Big Cartel site, but the online storefront is lamentably empty. Is this the zine that time forgot? Did I spend so long trying to review it that it went out of print? Is this a bunch of different zines printed in different colors, and shuffled together? Is it a puzzle? These are the questions that will haunt me until the end of my days. My advice to you is this: If you like funny stickers and weird printing and you hate staples but generally like graffiti, you're going to have a nice time looking at this. If you can find it. (CD)
lifegrime.bigcartel.com

TREMATODA ZINE VOL. 2
¥1,728 / 49 pgs
This beautiful art zine complies work from Japanese punk artists Anüstes, Takashi Kawasaki (who publishes under the name TKC Artworks), Sadam Yoshizawa, and Shunsuke. Most of what's reproduced are individual prints, with some being attached to the band, label, or flyer artwork for which they were created. While I don't know enough about visual art in general to make any direct comparisons, all four artists are exceptional and have similar styles that are intricate and often morbid in theme but somewhat psychedelic in execution, using only blacks and whites but not lacking in any shading for it. This collection is fully worthy of its magazine-style binding and nice thick matte paper cover. (DG)
trematoda.net

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #140/141
$3.25 / 62 pgs
TTWN is coming up on twenty-four years. This issue comes with the same mix of show reviews, record reviews, interviews, and political opinions that has reigned for a bit now. The zine is pretty Midwest-centric, though bands outside of there make guest appearances here and there. It continues. (MM)
ttwn@hotmail.com



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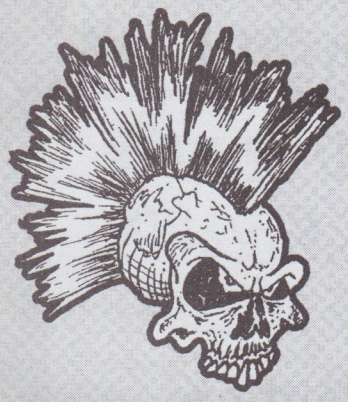

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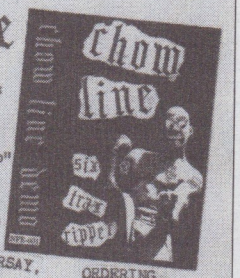

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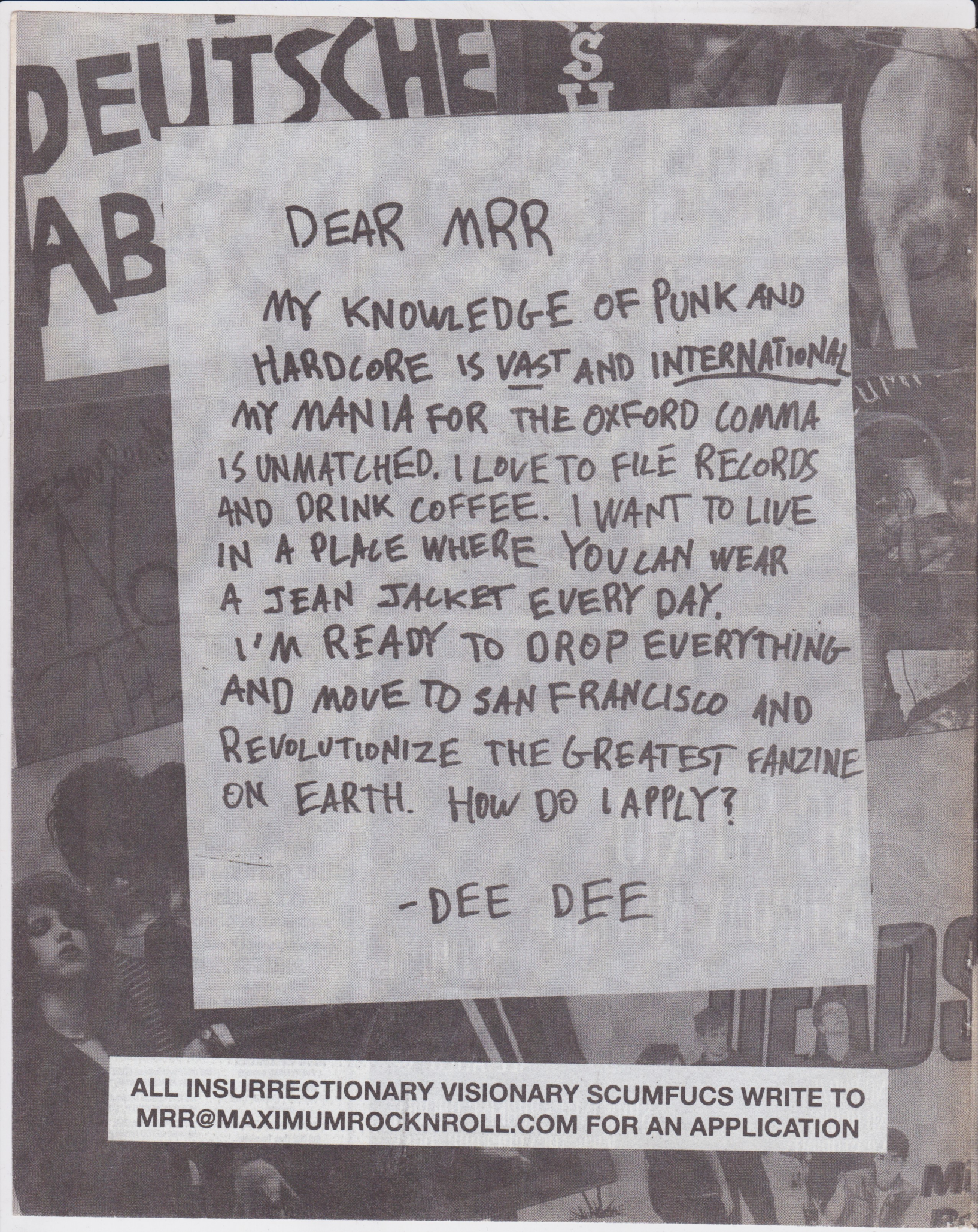
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